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BORDER TUSSLE

China reaffirms its claim over Arunachal

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THE HERO

Kohli shines as RCB gets past PBKS

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NEARBY

Janardhana Reddy rejoins BJP

BENGALURU
Mining baron and Kalyana Rajya Pragathi Paksha MLA G. Janardhana Reddy, who has several pending CBI cases against him, on Monday merged his party with the BJP and formally rejoined the saffron party along with his wife Aruna Lakshmi and other followers. » PAGE 4

Treated water can now be sold

BENGALURU
The State government has for the first time allowed treated water from localised sewage treatment plants (STPs) inside apartment complexes and gated communities to be sold on a commercial basis.

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UNSC calls for ceasefire in Gaza during Ramzan

The Security Council passes resolution 14-0 after the U.S. abstains from voting; Netanyahu cancels high-level delegation's Washington visit, accuses the U.S. of 'retreating' from a 'principled position'

Associated Press
UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations Security Council on Monday issued its first demand to halt the fighting in Gaza, calling for a ceasefire during the Muslim holy month of Ramzan in a vote that drew an immediate protest from the Israeli Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu cancelled a planned visit to Washington by a high-level delegation and accused the U.S. of "retreating" from a "principled position" by allowing the vote to pass without conditioning the ceasefire on the release of hostages held by Hamas.

The resolution passed 14-0 after the U.S. decided not to use its veto power and instead abstained on the resolution, which also demanded the release of all hostages taken captive during Hamas' October 7 surprise attack in southern Israel. But the measure does not link that demand to the ceasefire during Ramzan, which ends on April 9.

The Israeli delegation was to present White House officials with plans for an expected ground invasion of the strategic Gaza town of Rafah, where over 1 million Palestinian civilians have sought shelter.

At long last: The vote comes after Russia and China vetoed a U.S.-sponsored ceasefire resolution on Friday. AFP

U.S. reasoning

White House national security spokesman John Kirby said the U.S. had been "consistent" in its support for a ceasefire as part of a hostage deal.

"The reason we abstained is because this resolution text did not condemn Hamas," Mr. Kirby said.

The vote comes after Russia and China vetoed a U.S.-sponsored resolution on Friday that would have supported "an immediate and sustained ceasefire" in the Israeli-Hamas conflict.

The U.S. warned that the resolution approved on Monday could hurt negotiations to halt hostilities by the U.S., Egypt and Qatar, raising the possibility of another veto, this time by the Americans.

More than 32,000 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed during the fighting, according to the Gaza Health Ministry.

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EU launches probe against tech giants under new law

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

The European Union, on Monday, launched probes into whether Apple, Alphabet and Meta violated a new law, the Digital Markets Act (DMA), in what is the latest instance of governments trying to exercise greater control over the functioning of big tech companies. The companies could be fined up to 10% of their global revenues and 20% for repeat infringements of the DMA.

The announcement of the investigations comes just over three weeks after the bloc fined Apple more than €1.84 million (USD 2 billion) for anti-competitive behaviour in the market for the distribution of streaming music apps. The U.S. Department of Justice filed a case against Apple last week for allegedly stifling competition and keeping prices high in the smartphone market.

The DMA fully came into effect on March 7 and seeks to regulate large online companies called 'gatekeepers', whose products and services are used by some 450 million EU users. The DMA had designated six 'gatekeepers' in September last year: Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, ByteDance (owners of TikTok), Meta and Microsoft.

Two of the five announced investigations were about Alphabet and Apple's alleged "anti-steering" practices, the EU's competition commissioner Margrethe Vestager said, as she explained the provisions along with internal market commissioner Thierry Breton at a press conference in Brussels. The Commission will investigate whether these companies are preventing app manufacturers from directly communicating and contracting with end-users and thereby restricting user choice.

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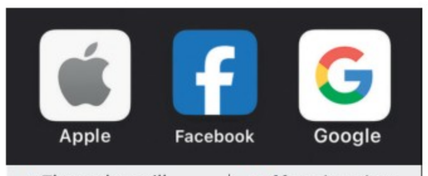
Under lens

What do the EU probes mean for Alphabet, Apple and Meta



- The probes will examine whether the companies violated the Digital Markets Act
- If found so, they could be fined up to 10% of their global revenue
- The investigations, which are likely to conclude in a year, will also look at issues around user choice, stifling competition, use of targeted advertising etc

State govt. alone can't decide on changing exam pattern: High Court

FROM THE COURT

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Changing the examination pattern for classes 5, 8, 9, and 11 is not something that can be decided by the State government alone, the High Court of Karnataka has said.

The government should discuss with all stakeholders, well in advance, before notifying change in the examination pattern in future academic years for the reason that the same can be effectively presented to the public in an efficacious way, the court has directed.

Equipping children

While declining to accept the contention of associations of certain unaided private schools that the changed pattern would hamper the well being and the growth of children, the court said: "The adoption of this method would prepare the students for board examinations in future and also that they will be well equipped to face the actual board exam."

A Division Bench, comprising Justice K. Somashekar and Justice Rajesh Rai K., made these observations in its March 22 judgement of allowing the government's appeal against the March 6 verdict of a single judge, who had quashed the government's decision to hold exams through Karnataka State Examination and Assessment Board (KSEAB) for these classes.

However, on allowing the government to resume exams for these classes as per the changed exam pattern, the court said that parents, and children of Class 5, 8, 9, and 11 were aware in advance of the fact that students would be facing the examination in the changed pattern.

"In no way it can be said that the parents were unaware of the developments and the children were unprepared," the court observed.

The changed exam pattern could not be termed as a board exam just because the question papers were being prepared by KSEAB, the court said.

Analysing the features of the pattern, which has been described as board exams by the associations of schools, the court said that merely because the question papers were prepared by KSEAB it could not be termed as a board exam as the changed pattern did not include key features of an actual board exam.

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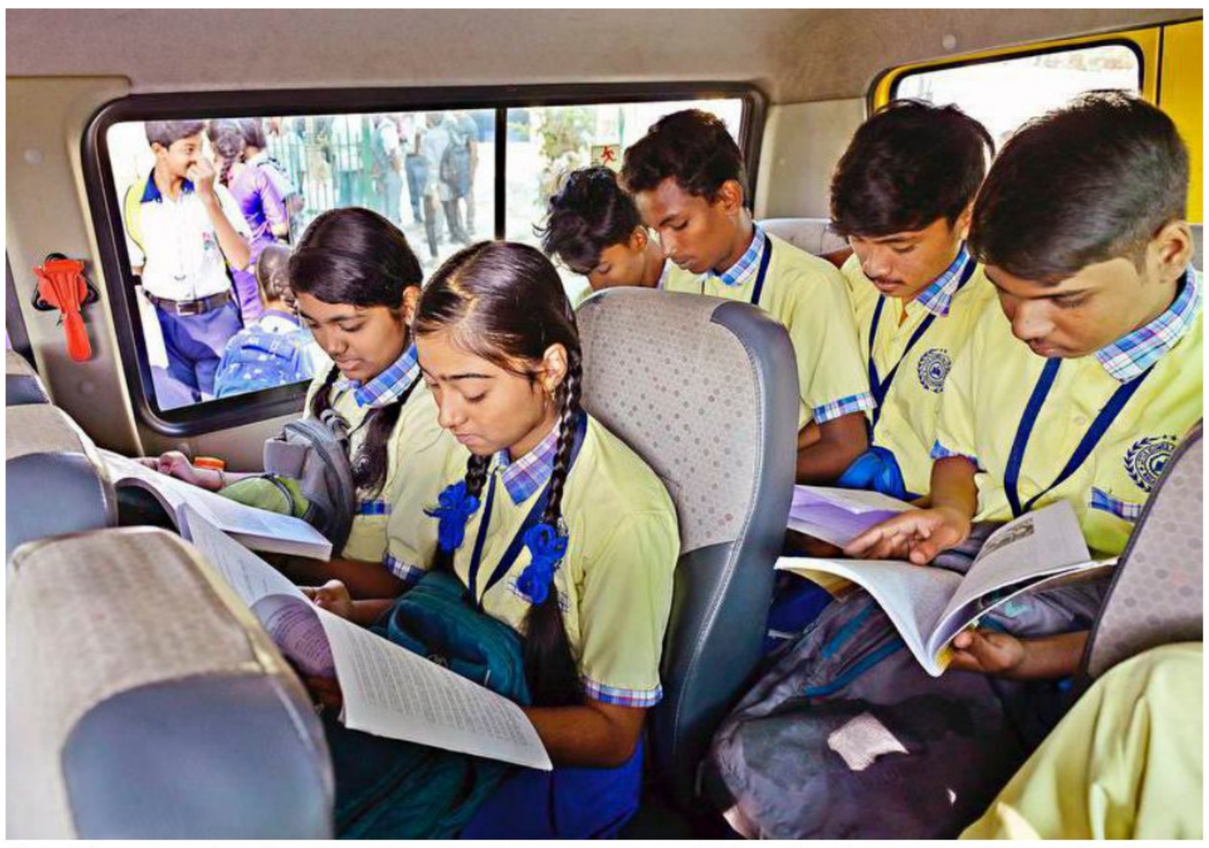
All set



Students focused on last-minute revision as they arrive at the government school at Kengeri to write the SSLC examination on Monday.
K. MURALI KUMAR (MORE PHOTOS, REPORTS ON PAGE 2)

14 injured in fire at Mahakal Temple in Madhya Pradesh

Press Trust of India
UJJAIN

Fourteen priests were injured in a fire that broke out at Mahakal Temple in Ujjain town of Madhya Pradesh on Monday.

The blaze took place in the *sanctum sanctorum* of the temple at 5.50 a.m., Ujjain Collector Neeraj Kumar Singh said.

"Fourteen priests suffered burns. Some are being treated in the district hospital here, while eight have sought treatment in Indore. A magisterial probe has been ordered into the incident," Mr. Singh said.

"The fire started as *gulaal* (coloured powder) fell on the *puja thali* (ritual plate) that contained burning camphor. It later spread on the floor and led to a blaze," he added.

In a post on X, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said: "The incident that happened in Mahakal temple of Ujjain is very painful... The local administration is engaged in every possible help to the victims under the supervision of the State government."

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav visits people injured in a fire that broke out in the Mahakal Temple on Monday. PTI

Kerala veterinary varsity V-C resigns

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Move comes after Governor cancels order to reinstate those suspended over student's death

Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (KVASU) Vice-Chancellor in-charge P.C. Saseendran tendered his resignation on Monday.

He stepped down a few hours after Governor Arif Mohammed Khan cancelled the Vice-Chancellor's order to reinstate 33 students of the College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences in Wayanad, suspended in connection with the death of a student, J.S. Sidharthan, in the college hostel in February. His family said he was tortured by fellow students, including activists of the Students Federation of India (SFI).

Following the Governor's intervention, the students were suspended again on Monday.

Dr. Saseendran was appointed on an interim basis after Mr. Khan suspended Vice-Chancellor M.R. Saseendranath over the student's death.

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Will Sangh Parivar renounce 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai': Pinarayi

The Hindu Bureau
MALAPPURAM

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has challenged the Sangh Parivar to renounce their slogan 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' because it was coined by a Muslim.

"It was Azimullah Khan, a Muslim, who first raised the slogan 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai'. The Sangh Parivar followers are not aware of that. Will they be ready to renounce that slogan because it was made by a Muslim?" the Chief Minister said while addressing a rally against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) organised by the CPI (M) here on Monday.

Pinarayi Vijayan

Azimullah Khan, who was a strategist in the first war of Indian Independence, was credited to have first raised the call for motherland when he used the slogan "Madar-e-watan, Bharat ki Jai" in 1857.

The Chief Minister said that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) was focusing on Muslims with the objective of turning them into second-class citizens. "The Sangh Parivar views Muslims as a community that should be driven away from the country. They are devising many things in order to achieve that goal," he said.

Mr. Vijayan also lashed out at the Congress for its "insincere attitude" towards the anti-CAA protests.

The Congress had maintained a criminal silence when protests were fuming against the CAA, he said.

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» PAGE 10

Small height, big fight — Tanuja Kan(wer) and she did

Over the past two seasons, the Shimla-born cricketer has been skipper Beth Mooney's go-to resource in strife, something Giants have found themselves in far too often. These situations have allowed her to come into her own as a thinking cricketer

SPORTZPICS/WPL

Lavanya Lakshminarayanan

Long before Tanuja Kanwer was throwing shade at the biggest names in international cricket at the Women's Premier League, she was an ambitious sports-loving kid growing up in Himachal Pradesh.

Badminton and volleyball were Tanuja's choice of sports in school.

"I even gave trials in volleyball but I didn't have the height to continue in the sport. The coaches would always tell me that I didn't have the height," Tanuja, representing Gujarat Giants in the WPL, told *The Hindu* on the sidelines of the league's second edition.

"I would play cricket with my siblings and in school. My father saw my interest in the game and enrolled me in an academy," she added. There was no turning back.

Vertical limits

The now 26-year-old had her father's unconditional support as she meandered through the turns of the sport. Her journey also had a pit stop at the Himachal Cricket Academy.

A height of five feet is not one you would associate with a pace bowler. Tanuja's coaches early on did not either, which eventually paved the way for her to discover her talents as a tweaker.

"I started as a medium pacer. We used to play with a Cosco ball. At that time, all of us medium pacers began trying out spin too. My coach then, Pavan sir, told me to switch to spin because my height wasn't as much to successfully bowl as a pacer. So I began bowling spin. Due to my height, I wouldn't get as much pace, so when I switched to spin, I started getting more wickets and as a result, enjoyed the game also a lot more," she remembered.

In 2011, Tanuja broke into the U-19 state team. Consistent performances in the domestic circuit earned her India A call-ups against Australia and Bangladesh over the years. She was a crucial part of India's triumph in the ACC Emerging Teams Asia Cup in Colombo, taking four wickets in the final.

In 2022, a year before the WPL would take shape, Tanuja had an encouraging season. She was the joint second-highest wicket-taker for Railways in the 2022 Senior Women's T20 Trophy with eight scalps in the bag. She was also part of the victorious Central Zone side in the Senior Inter Zonal T20 Cup. She also had a fruitful One-Day campaign with Railways, finishing with 18 wickets and a stupendous 2.43 economy rate in 11 innings.

Standout talent

The coaches in the Giants set up saw value in investing in a player of such calibre and roped her in during the auction for Rs. 50 Lakh, an improvement on her RS.10 Lakh base price. Tanuja proved to be good value for money in an otherwise bleak season for the Giants. The franchise finished at the bottom but Tanuja, who took the first-ever wicket in the WPL when she dismissed Yastika Bhatia, was just getting started. She ended the season with five wickets to her name but was quickly identified by the think tank as a talent to build foundations with. She was retained ahead of the auction for the 2024 season.

In the run up to WPL 2024, Tanuja took nine wickets in six outings in the Senior Women's One-Day trophy, part of a

title-winning Railways outfit. This campaign also saw her score a nifty 57-ball 44 in a two-wicket win against Madhya Pradesh.

"We had week-long camps here and there. When Railways duty ended, we had small GG camps for the domestic players. There was a mix of fitness and skill work in these sessions," she explained.

"After last year's stint in the WPL, I realised that it's important to round myself out in bowling as well as batting and I worked on that. I worked on the power hitting aspect which was essential. This was alongside the variations I worked on with the ball," she added.

While the franchise itself encountered the same fate this time around too, finishing dead last, Tanuja bettered her showing with the ball, finishing with ten wickets.

She was a firebrand on the field and was heavily appreciated for her aggression and quick thinking. Her wicket haul was also the second best by an Indian uncapped player (after Asha Sobhana who claimed 12).

Checklist for the season

Tanuja came into the season with a lot of unfinished business. Last year, during a game against Royal Challengers Bangalore (which RCB won by eight wickets), she was taken to the cleaners by a certain Sophie Devine.

She finished that game having conceded 50 runs in just three overs with no wickets to show for consolation.

So when Tanuja dismissed Devine with a stunning turner, knocking off the off stump's bail after Devine came down the track to get bat on it, she was over the moon.

"I took a lot of beating from her last season and that stayed in my mind. Dismissing her was very satisfying," she admitted.

"Last year when I went back home from the WPL, folks around my house, neighbours and friends would tell me that they felt really bad when I was hit for a four or six. I loved that, when they said they want only wickets when I bowl."

She licked her wounds in training, fine-tuning what she's good at and adding a few new tricks to her repertoire.

"There weren't too many technical changes. I added a slower one and a yorker to my arsenal. First, I would rely solely on my stock ball. But adding these variations helped me a lot this season," Tanuja explained.

Over the past two seasons, the Shimla-born cricketer has been skipper Beth Mooney's go-to resource in strife, a mood the Giants have found themselves in far too often.

These situations have allowed her to come into her own as a thinking cricketer.

Stepping up

"She's competitive and knows what she wants," Mooney said about the bowler. "Sometimes we have a few little arguments on the field about what field to set... but if I could pick one player in India to have on my team, it's probably her."

Tanuja also understands the value of rubbing shoulders with international veterans.

"When I played the last season, I learnt a lot from the India internationals and the foreign players. Once I got back after the season, I realised that the level of the WPL was quite high and I wanted to up my game. I played domestic only after that, but the lessons I took from there helped me step up a bit," she explained.

"The WPL is a massive platform for domestic players because we have not experienced anything like this before in our lives."

"Usually, a player would move from the domestic level straight to the international stage and it took that call up for us to gain better experience. Here, this is a nice bridge where we get that experience of high quality cricket against the best in the world."

This benefit was something her family got to see first-hand when they came down to New Delhi to watch Tanuja play.

"I told my folks that they were lucky for us because we won that match. This was the first time they watched a game in the stadium," she gushed, speaking about the win over RCB.

"When my siblings would watch me on TV and if I had dropped a catch or let the ball pass through, they'd tell me, "*Arey yaar, yeh kya kiya? Itna toh hum bhi pakad lenge*." (what did you do? Even we can do this) When they finally watched a match live, they told me that it was not right of them to say that. This is so much harder than it looks," she stated.

Being a left-arm spinner and one who can hold her own in a fairly star-studded team and against high-profile achievers in the ecosystem, Tanuja has made a case for trusting her with a spot in the national team.

Her captain, Mooney, hopes to go up against her in national colours sooner rather than later.

"She bowls left-arm spin which is pretty effective here and she bowls the really tough overs. I throw her in the deep end and she loves it," Mooney said. "I can't speak more highly of her and hopefully, one day, we see her in an India shirt."

THE GIST

- Tanuja Kanwer claimed the first-ever wicket in WPL history when she dismissed Yastika Bhatia in the season opening clash between Gujarat Giants and Mumbai Indians last year
- She represents Railways in the Indian domestic set up and has been a key cog in the wheel for the hugely successful side
- Tanuja is a left-arm spinner, a commodity that's rare to come by in Indian women's cricket. With her quick thinking and attacking style of cricket, she has put her best foot forward in bidding for a national call-up
- Beth Mooney holds Tanuja in high regard, even identifying her as one of the players to watch out for this year ahead of the season (alongside Phoebe Litchfield and Harleen Deol who both had a tournament to forget)
- She was bought in the WPL 2023 auction for ₹50 lakh by the Giants

Two invigilators suspended for dereliction of examination duty

The examination was conducted at 2,750 centres with 98.41% attendance

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Students doing last-minute revision before the SSLC examination at the government school in Kengeri off Mysore Road on Monday. K. MURALI KUMAR

Class 8 and 9 students on the first day of exam at the Government Model High School at Matadhahalli. SUDHAKARA JAIN

Two invigilators were suspended in Yadgir district for dereliction of duty, and one student was debarred for malpractice in Vijayapura district on the first day of the first annual examination of class 10 (SSLC) on Monday.

The suspended invigilators are Sahebagowda Ukkali, an assistant teacher working as an invigilator at Government Junior College (Boys) examination centre, Hunasagi of Surapura taluk, and Hanamantraya, an assistant teacher posted as an invigilator at Government Junior College (Boys) examination centre, Surapura.

They were allegedly allowing students to copy in the examination hall and were suspended with immediate effect by the Deputy Director of Public Instruction (DDPI), Yadgir. But no students were debarred.

The first language Kannada, Telugu, Tamil, Hindi, Marathi, Urdu, English, and Sanskrit exams for class 10 were held across the State on Monday. The Karnataka State Examination and Assessment Board (KSEAB), which decided to conduct the class 10 examinations under CCTV surveillance this year, has taken steps to webcast the examination process for the first time.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Zilla Panchyat of Yadgir was watching the webcast in his office and found that students were copying in room 5 of the Government Junior College (Boys) examination centre, Surapura, and room 11 of the Government Junior College (Boys) examination centre, Hunsagi. However, the invigilators did not take any action despite the mass copying, nor was it brought to the attention of the chief of the examination centre. As a result, the CEO of Zilla Panchyat of Yadgir directed action to be taken against the guilty teachers.

Apart from this, the examination was conducted smoothly in 2,750 examination centres with 98.41% attendance. Of the 8,45,811 students who registered for the first language examination, 8,32,343 were present, and 13,468 were absent.

Ritesh, a class 10 student from Bengaluru, said, "This year's Kannada examination was very easy, and I wrote well."

Public transport corporations have provided free bus service for the students.

Along with this, the KSEAB resumed the halted board exams (Summative Assessment-2) for classes 5, 8, and 9 in the afternoon. Environmental Studies for class 5 and third language exams were held for classes 8 and 9.

2 SSLC students die before exam, one while writing it

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA

Students arrive to appear for the SSLC exam at a government school in Kengeri, on Monday. K. MURALI KUMAR

Two SSLC students, who were to appear for the board examinations, which began on Monday, died in separate incidents. While one met with an accident, another allegedly ended his life. Another student died after feeling ill during the exam.

Ummai Khulsum, 16, of Jambaraghatta in Bhadravati taluk, was waiting to catch a bus at Vittalapura on Sunday evening when she was hit by a car. She died on the spot.

In another case, Parasuhram Babu, 16, was found dead in his residence at Yadehalli in Sagar taluk on March 25, hours before the SSLC examinations began. Babu belonged to a family that had migrated from Dandeli in Uttara Kannada. He was a student of Karnataka Public School at Yedehalli.

In the third incident, C.S. Mohankumar, 16, who was writing the class 10 examination, died at Turuvekere of Tumakuru district on Monday.

Mohankumar was a resident of Chikkanayakanahalli taluk. He fell ill while writing the examination at the examination centre and was rushed to the government hospital.

Later, as he became seriously ill, he was shifted to the district hospital. But he died on the way in the ambulance.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Somashekhara, Block Education Officer (BEO) of Turuvekere taluk said that the student died due to respiratory problem.

In the third incident, a student died while being taken to hospital

"The student was residing in the hostel run by the Backward Classes Welfare Department. For the last two or three days, he had respiratory problem. The treatment was also given on Sunday. The parents said that they will take him back for treatment after the examination on Monday. However, while writing the exam, the student again fell ill due to breathing problems. Financial assistance will be given to his parents through the Student Welfare Fund in the department," he added.

(Those in distress or having suicidal thoughts can call Arogya Sahayavani number 104 for help).

Student writes mock exam

The Hindu Bureau
HUBBALLI

A class 10 student from Ranebennur taluk staged a protest along with his parents by writing a mock examination in front of the Deputy Commissioner's office in Haveri on Monday saying that the headmaster of his school had deprived him of an opportunity to write the SSLC examination by giving false information about his hall ticket.

Abhishek Jaramalla of Government High School of Haranagiri in Ranbennur taluk wrote the mock exam in protest, with the support of SFI. Abhishek's parents, who accompanied him, said because of health issues, their son could not attend classes in January. They submitted all documents pertaining to their son's medical treatment to the school. However, he was denied hall ticket, they said.

Associate secretary of SFI, Haveri district unit, Basavaraj S. said it was condemnable that the headmaster cheated the student by saying the school authorities had not received the hall ticket.

Two killed in separate accidents

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 44-year-old truck driver was killed on the spot when the vehicle he was driving crashed into an under-construction metro pillar on Ballari road under Chikkajala police station limits on Saturday night. The deceased has been identified as Sajid Khan, 44, a native of Madhya Pradesh. According to the police, he was driving rashly and crashed into the metro pillar. The impact was so high that the front of the truck was mangled and he was killed on the spot.

Man arrested for killing sister of female friend over trivial row

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Parappana Agrahara police arrested a 29-year-old food delivery personnel who allegedly strangled a 42-year-old garment factory worker while intervening in a fight between her and her sister in Singasandra on Sunday.

The accused Rajesh Kumar was a friend of Geetha Kumari, a garment factory employee. She was living with her sister Gudiya Devi, 42, who was also working in a factory. Police said on Saturday, the duo was fighting over Gudiya's mobile phone addiction when Rajesh Kumar visited. He tried to pacify them and in the melee, strangulated Gudiya, who fell unconscious. The duo rushed her to a nearby hospital where the doctor declared her as brought dead.

From Page One

'Govt. alone can't decide on exam pattern change'

Key features, like detention of unsuccessful students, publicly displaying results, evaluation of answer scripts by external faculty, were not made applicable to the changed exam method, the court noted.

Even though the question papers were prepared by KSEAB in the changed pattern, no student was being detained in the same class in case of their poor performance and evaluation of answer papers would be done by the internal faculty, the court said. "When the examinations are held with no expulsion policy, in no manner the same can be considered as the board exam and in violation of the provisions of the RTE Act, 2009," the court observed.

College dropout arrested for harassing student

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Jayanagar police arrested a 26-year-old man for allegedly harassing a college student near a private college recently.

The accused, identified as Suresh, a college dropout, used to allegedly stalk and harass the victim on her way to and from college.

The accused recently stalked her and touched her inappropriately, said the police.

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AFFIDAVIT

I, KALIKIRI PRATHAP S/o Sri. Kalikiri Ramachandraiah, R/o Nakshatra Lake View Apaprtment, Subashnagar, Banglore South, Bangalore-560056 Karnataka do hereby solemnly affirm and state that in my Aadhar Card and Pan Card and all document my name is mentioned as KALIKIRI PRATHAP but in old passport my name is mentioned as **KALIKIRI PRATAP.** I further request that, the concerned authorities to mention in my name as **KALIKIRI PRATHAP** instead of **KALIKIRI PRATAP** and both the name belongs to me only. Sworn before notary H.S. Sakalesh Aradhya on Dt: 25/03/2024, Adhaar Number 3141 5111 2376

PUBLIC NOTICE

BE IT KNOW TO ALL MEN that, my clients, Sri. Pradeep, s/o Kariyappa & Smt. Usha, w/o Pradeep, both r/at No.154/14, Babusahebara Palya, Kengeri, Bengaluru-560 060, intend to purchase the property which is fully described in the schedule given hereunder from Sri. Murali.M, s/o Markandaiah and Smt. Swathi A.L, w/o Murali M, both r/at No.17/2, 22nd Main, 2nd Cross, Hanumagiri Nagar, Chikkalasandra, Subramanyapura, Bengaluru South-560 061 and accordingly entered into an Agreement of Sale, dtd:18.03.2024.

Any person/Govt./Local Bodies claiming any right, title or interest over the said property may inform the same to my client or his counsel, in writing within 15 days from today.

If objections are not received within that date my client will go ahead with the purchase and no further objection will be valid after that.

SCHEDULE

ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL of BDA Site No.214, Municipal Khatha No.214/214/214, Measuring East to West : 9.14 meters and North to South : 6.10 meters, totally measuring 55.75 Sq.meters, formed by the BDA, situated at Jnanabharathi (Valagerehalli) 1st Block, presently with the limits of BBMP, Ward No.130 and is bounded on:

East by : Site No.177, West by : 4th Main Road, North by : Site No.213, South by : Site No.215

G.R. Gangadhara, Advocate
431, 2nd Floor, Alankar Pearl Plaza, K.G. Road, Bengaluru-560009.
Mob : +91 9740296679
Email : grgangadhara@gmail.com
Place: Bengaluru Date: 25.03.2024

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are informed that my client **"Mr.Kiran K.,** S/o. Mr.Krishnappa intends to purchase the property **bearing Site No.C-11,** Ward No.6. Khatha No.438/C-11, formed out of Residential converted Sy.No.4 and Sy.Nos.3/1, 3/3, 13/6, 13/7A,113/7C, 15/1, 15/3, 15/2, 12, 13/5, 13/7B, 14/2, 17, 11, 16/3, 13/4, 16/2, 25/1, 3/2, 10/7, 10/8, 10/9, 10/10, 13/1, 13/2, 13/3 and others, in the Layout known as **"MANYATA RESIDENCY",** situated at Rachenahalli Village, K.R.Puram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, presently comes under the limits of BBMP, Bangalore, which is bounded as follows:

East by : Site No.F-12,
West by : Remaining Portion of Site No.C-11,
North by : Private Property,
South by : Road.

From its owner **Mr. Pawan Kumar N.,** S/o. Narayana Swamy H.R.

Persons having any right over the said properties may lodge their objections/claims with documentary evidence within **10 days** from the date of this notice, failing which it would be presumed that there are no claims over the said property.

MVJS Law Chambers,
Advocate,
No.52, 4th Cross, Ganesha Block, Mahalakshmi Layout, Bangalore 560 096.
Mobile Nos. 9538305787 / 9844402253.
Email mvjslawchambers@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to bring to the notice of the general public that my client **Mr Sethuraman Subramaniyan S/o Mr Subramanian,** Residing at No 17-1, V Lakshmipuran Thirumnayam Taluk, Nelikonam, V. Lakshmipuram, Pudukkottai Tamil Nadu-6224 12, Is intending to purchase the schedule property mentioned hereunder from **M/s LORVIN PROJECTS** A Partnership Firm represented by its Managing Partners Mr S Damodaram S/o S Chinnaswamy Naidu and Mr C Mounish S/o Sri C Vishwanatha Naidu, registered office at B6, First Floor Silver Springs , layout Munnekolalu Bangalore 560 037 entered into the joint Development Agreement dated 24/01/2022 registered document no 14864/2021 -22, registered before the sub Registrar office Shivajinagar (Banaswadi) Bangalore with the land lord Mr Nagaraj S/o Late Sri Dasappa and their Family members All are residing at Garudacharpalya, Mahadeapura Post, KR Puram Hobli, Bangalore 560048. If Anyone or establishment, Person/s, firm/ company/institution/ organization is/are having any right, title, interest, claim, share, or objections in respect of schedule property hereby required / request to intimate in writing to the undersigned advocate or may contact the undersigned advocate with documentary proof, within **7 days** hereof, and An claim made after the stipulated period, will not be considered, it will be presumed that there is/are no claims and will not be valid, same shall be null & void, such person/s shall be considered as waived and not binding on my Client and my Client will proceed with completion of sale transaction by way of execution Sale Deed in respect of the schedule property in/on the name of my Client.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the Property bearing **Flat No. 005,** in Ground Floor of the Apartment Building Know as **"LORVIN MEADOWS"** having a super buit up area of 1135 sqft with one covered car parking space, together with 249 sqft undivided share constructed on House list No 29, 29/1 present BBMP khatha SI. No. 90 (old No. 87) situated at **Garudacharpalya Village, Mahadevapura Dakle, KR Puram Hobli, Earlier Bangalore South Taluk, Presently Bangalore East Taluk** Presently under the administrative jurisdication of BBMP, Bangalore Measuring East to west: 51 Ft, North to South : 155ft, in all measuring 7905 sqft, and bounded on the : **East by: Sri Ballaki Munikrishnappa's, West by: Property belongs to Gangappa, North by: Govt Library & Lakshmaiah South by: Road.**

B. Shubhakar BA LL.B.,
Advocate
#601, Old Police Station Road, Next to Srinivasa poly clinic, Krishnarajapuram, Bangalore 560036
Mobile: + 91 9448950488,
email : shubhakar14@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client Sri. Chintha Kunta Hari Prasad Reddy S/o. Sri. C. Lakshmi Reddy has intending to purchase of the schedule property mentioned hereunder for a valuable consideration from its owners 1. Smt. K. B. Shanthi W/o. Sri. Muralee Krishnan and 2. Sri. Muralee Krishnan S/o. Sri. M. Krishnan both are residing at No. J1-5072, Sobha Silicon Oasis, Ward No. 192, Beratena Agrahara Village, Bangalore.

If any persons having any claims, right, title and interest whatsoever over the schedule property may forward their objections to the undersigned in writing with supporting documents of your such claims, within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. Failing which it will be deemed that there are no claims, right, title and interest by anybody and my client will proceed for completion of sale transaction and thereafter no claims will be considered.

SCHEDULE

3-BHK apartment Flat bearing No. J1-5072 in the 7thFloor of 1-Block of Wing 5 of phase -1 having 1513.21 Sq. Ft. of SBA in the Apartment building known as "SOBHA SILICON OASIS" together with one covered car parking along with 547.79 Sq. Ft. of UDS in the converted bearing Old Sy. No. 15, New Sy. No. 15/1 & 15/2, Sy. No. 16/1 & 16/2 situated at Beratena Agrahara Village, Begur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk and bounded on the : East by : Sy. No. 25, West by : Sy. No. 10, 11,12 & 13, North by: Road and Naganathapura Village Boundary, South by : Sy. No. 10, 17 & 18.

MANJUNATHA & ASSOCIATES
K. N. MANJUNATHA CHARY, ROOPA. B, & B.N. JAGADISH KUMAR, Advocates, # 96, 1st Floor, 1st Main, 4th Cross, Maruthi Nagar, Madiwala, Bangalore- 68, Mob: 9845965626, 7406090832
Bangalore, Date : 25-03-2024

BEFORE THE SOLE ARBITRATOR OF RETD. JUSTICE SRI. ASHOK L PUJAR AT ARBITRATION AND CONCILIATION CENTRE, BENGALURU IN AC 203/2023

Claimants: 1) M/s Venkatesha Education Society, Old No. 106/108, Charles, Campbell Road, Cox Town, Bengaluru - 560005.
2) MVJ Medical College and Research Hospital, 30th KM Milestone, NH 75, Dandupalya, Kolathur Post, Hoskote, Bengaluru - 562 114.

v/s

Respondent : 1) Dr. Prashanath TE, S/o T. R. Ethiraj, 809, 35 - C Cross, 9th Main, Jayanagar - 4th Block, Bengaluru 560 011.

NOTICE / SUMMONS TO RESPONDENT

TO:
RESPONDENT : Dr. Prashanth TE, S/o T. R. Ethiraj, 809, 35 - C Cross, 9th Main, Jayanagar - 4th Block, Bengaluru 560 011.

Whereas, the above-named Claimants have instituted this case, which pertains to non-payment of MD Radio Diagnosis course fees payable by the Respondent to the Claimants amounting to: (a) INR. 5,06,120/- (Rupees Five Lakhs and Six Thousand and One Hundred and Twenty Only) along with interest of 18% per annum from 31st May, 2017, till the date of complete payment to the Claimants; and (b) INR. 5,06,120/- (Rupees Five Lakhs and Six Thousand and One Hundred and Twenty Only) along with interest of 18% per annum from 31st May, 2018, till the date of complete payment to the Claimants.

You are hereby summoned to appear before this Tribunal **on 02.04.2024 at 2:30 pm** in person or through Advocate/Pleader to answer the question to the same. Failing which the case will be heard and determined as ex-parte.

Given under my hand and seal of the Arbitration Tribunal, this 20th day of March 2024.

By order of the Arbitrator, Bengaluru
Nirmala .C, Session Officer, I/c
Arbitration & Conciliation Centre - Bengaluru, (High Court of Karnataka)
Bengaluru - 560 001.
Deepak Bhaskar & Associates
No. 410-411, Level Four, Prestige Centre Point, Cunningham Road, Bengaluru - 560 052.
Email : admin@deepakbhaskar.com

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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, R GOPAL, Father of Minor. GOPAL NEREEKSHA, R/at # 26, 9th Cross, Gullappa Road, Bang 33 have changed my daughters name from NIREEKSHA to GOPAL NEREEKSHA for all her future purposes by affidavit 23–03–2024 sworn before notary Chandrasekar Y R.

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, R GOPAL, Father of Minor. GOPAL AHARSHEETH, R/at # 26, 9th Cross, Gullappa Road, Bang 33 have changed my sons name from HARSHITH to GOPAL AHARSHEETH for all his future purposes by affidavit 23–03–2024 sworn before notary Chandrasekar Y R

I, Kanthimathi Neelakantan, Spouse of Late.Gp.Capt.N.Neelakantan, resident of No.07, Sector A, Jal Vayu Vihar, Kalyan Nagar, Bangalore-560043, have changed my name from Kanthimathi Neelakantan to Kanthi Neelakantan vide affidavit dated 15th March 2024 sworn before VII th Addl. Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Bangalore.

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LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF CITY CIVIL AND SESSION JUDGE, MAYO HALL AT BANGALORE (CCH-73)
O.S. No.25101/2023
Between :
M/S ICICI BANK LIMITED
Mittal Tower, M.G. Road, Bangalore-560 001
Represented by its officer of Power of Attorney Holder
Ms. Mansi Singh, Aged about 24 years, D/o Mr. Anil Kumar Singh ...Plaintiff
And
1. M/S HILIFE VENTURES (P) LTD.
Rep. by its Director Mr. Druva Kumar Puligal, Flat No. 10, Hilife Triflora Apt., Gunjur, 137/2, Triflora, Varthur, Bangalore- 560 066.
...Defendant
Summons To Defendant
Whereas, the above named Plaintiff has filed a Civil Suit for Recovery of a sum of **Rs. 8,66,544.63 (Rupees Eight Lakhs Sixty Six Thousand Five Hundred Forty Four paisa Sixty Three Only)** apart from future interest of **14.01% p.a.,** in **O.S. No. 25101/2023** and same is pending adjudication in **CCH 73,** Before 72nd Addl. City Civil Court, Mayohall, Bengaluru.
You are hereby summoned to appear before the Hon'ble Court on the 27th Day of April, 2024 at 11 A.M. answer to the same, if failed the Suit will be decided in your absence, Exparte.
Given under my Hand and Seal of the Court this the **20th day of March, 2024**
By the order of court
DEPUTY REGISTRAR
CITY CIVIL COURT, MAYO HALL, BENGALURU- 560 001
FX & CO., ADVOCATES, New No.99, Old No.11/ Gover Road, Cox Town, BENGALURU- 560 005.

IN THE COURT OF CITY CIVIL JUDGE, MAYO HALL AT BANGALORE (CCH-73)
O.S. No. 25857/2023
BETWEEN :
M/S ICICI BANK LIMITED
Mittal Tower, M.G. Road, Bangalore- 560 001
Represented by its officer of Power of Attorney Holder
Ms. Pramodh G.
S/o. Mr. B. Gurumallappa
Aged about 45 years,
fxcol@yahoo.co.in
Phone No. 8041216669.
...PLAINTIFF
AND :
Mr. BUDHIRAJ SAWTARAM JANI, S/o. Sawtaram Varingarm Jani,
Aged 38 years,
Ground Floor, No. 44/2 Channasandra, Kadugodi Post, BANGALORE- 560 068.
...DEFENDANT
Summons to Defendant
Whereas, the above named Plaintiff has filed a Civil Suit for Recovery of a sum of **Rs. 7,02,602.90/- (Rupees Seven Lakhs Two Thousand Six Hundred and Two and Paisa Nine Zero Only)** apart from future interest of 8.50% p.a. in **O.S. NO. 25857/2023** and same is pending adjudication in **CCH 73,** Before Addl., City Civil Court, Mayo Hall, Bengaluru.
You are hereby summoned to appear before the Hon'ble Court on the **27th day of May, 2024** at **11:00 A.M.** to answer to the same, if failed the suit will be decided in your absence, Exparte.
Given under my Hand and Seal of the Court this the **20th** day of **March, 2024.**
By the order of court
Deputy Registrar,
City Civil Court, Mayo Hall, BENGALURU- 560 001
FX & CO., ADVOCATES, New No. 9, Old No. 11/1 Gover Road, Cox Town, BENGALURU- 560 005.

Why does the weakness of low durability dog newer vaccines?

Not all vaccines prompt the body to make B cells. Some require boosters to enhance the duration of immunity, ranging from six months to a few years. Also, vaccines trigger production of memory B cells to different degrees, even as having memory B cells alone doesn't guarantee protection

Vipin M. Vashishtha
Puneet Kumar

The genetic stability of the virus contained in a vaccine also influences the durability of immunity. MUFID MAJNUN/UNSPLASH

Once an individual has received a measles jab, they are usually considered protected against measles disease for their entire life. The measles vaccine is one of the most potent vaccines in our armamentarium today. But this is not the case with most other vaccines. One needs to take several boosters for a long protection. Why is this the case?

In a recently published review of 34 currently licensed vaccines for the duration of their protective immunity, it was found that only five vaccines provide long-lasting protection spanning more than 20 years and only three provide lifelong protection. Of these 34 vaccines, 15 provide 5-20 years of protection, whereas a similar number of other shots offer short-term protection that lasts around five years or less.

More importantly, barring a very few, most of the new-generation vaccines have a short duration of protection.

Different immune responses

Post-vaccination immunity develops in a complex process. In the fundamental immunological mechanism, our lymph nodes first produce the memory B cells that confer long-term protection against a disease.

These cells 'memorise' the antigen the vaccine has delivered. In future, when a foreign object like a virus enters the body bearing the same antigen, the B cells will trigger the production of a large number of potent antibodies to destroy it, removing the infection.

These memory B cells require T cell support, and only vaccines that stimulate T cells can also induce the body to produce them.

Further, not all vaccines - including the polysaccharide typhoid and the pneumococcal vaccines - prompt the body to make B cells.

In some cases, frequent boosters are required to enhance the duration of immunity the cells confer, ranging from six months to a few years. Also, vaccines trigger the production of memory B cells to different degrees, plus having memory B cells alone does not guarantee protection.

Following the administration of the measles and the rubella vaccines, the level of memory B cells in the blood plasma remains constant.

It corresponds well with antibody levels decades later. This is not the case with the chickenpox, tetanus, and diphtheria vaccines - suggesting that memory B-cell persistence may not ensure antibody durability and that another mechanism may be involved in sustaining antibody levels.

Another essential immune cell, called long-lasting plasma cell (LLPC), migrates from the lymph node to the bone marrow and may endure for decades. LLPCs are the main immunological factor in vaccine-induced immunity. Every vaccine tries to create long-lasting plasma cells for lifelong protection, a.k.a. the immunology 'holy grail'. |

The measles and rubella vaccines produce these cells in the bone marrow. However, some potent vaccines, such as the mRNA COVID-19 shots, fail to activate these cells in the bone marrow.

To provide long-term protection, then, vaccines must generate memory B cells and LLPCs in the bone marrow.

Different vaccines differ in their ability to produce these cells, explaining the disparity in their durabilities.

Explaining the disparity in durability

There are three main categories of factors responsible: vaccine-related, target pathogen-related, and host-related.

Live viral vaccinations - including the vaccines for measles, rubella, yellow fever, chickenpox, and polio (oral) - provide longer lasting protection than killed pathogen or subunit vaccines. Newer platforms like 'virus-like particle' (VLP) also offer long-term protection. The HPV vaccines were developed using this platform.

Next, the proper interval between doses of a multi-dose vaccine, like that for hepatitis B, matters. A long interval of at least six months between the priming and the booster doses is essential for adequately processing the antigen and a robust, durable immune response. Adding adjuvants to vaccines also significantly affects vaccine-induced immune responses and their persistence. Some novel adjuvants, like TLR agonists, can directly influence memory B cell functions as well.

The durability of vaccine-induced protection also depends on the characteristics of the respective pathogens. Viruses that quickly infect the body (shorter incubation period) don't give enough time for the immune system to respond effectively. Examples include the influenza and the SARS-CoV-2 viruses. Whether it is a natural infection or vaccine-induced, the resulting immunity is not long-standing.

The converse is also true: infections or vaccines against viruses like mumps, measles, and yellow fever, with extended incubation periods, lead to durable immunity since the immune system has more time to respond.

> As the mechanisms of immune response durability become more apparent, we can construct vaccines strategically to provide durable vaccine-induced protection with fewer doses

Further, pathogens that cause only mucosal infections but minimal blood infection, like SARS-CoV-2, influenza, and the respiratory syncytial virus, pass from one person to another in a short span, before our immune system has had the time to launch an immune response. This is the reason why reinfections are frequent with these viruses.

The genetic stability of the virus contained in a vaccine also influences the durability of immunity. We know RNA viruses are known for their high mutation rates. (Both measles and SARS-CoV-2 are single-stranded RNA viruses.) While we still use the same strain of measles vaccine isolated from the throat of David Edmonston in 1954, the SARS-CoV-2 vaccines have been updated thrice in the last four years.

This is also why the flu vaccines need to be revised twice a year. The measles virus' surface glycoprotein is more resistant to ongoing mutations. On the other hand, only a handful of mutations at the spike protein change the antigenic nature of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Next, host-related factors affect durability. The individual's age at the time of vaccination influences the persistence of vaccine-induced antibodies: the response is shorter at both extremes of age because of immaturity and senescence of the immune system, respectively.

Immune responses may also vary with gender. Studies have found that biologically female bodies elicit more exuberant immune responses to infections than males. Recent studies have also found obesity may accelerate the waning of vaccine efficacy.

The time of day a vaccine is given also affects the immune response's robustness. Shots in the morning have been demonstrated to confer better immunological responses than those later in the day. The circadian clock affects immune-cell processes like cytokine generation, cell trafficking, dendritic cell activity, and T and B cell activity. Studies in mice have found a good night's sleep may also boost the immunological interactions and provide enduring protection.

New bioengineering technologies are evolving rapidly. With nanoparticles and virus-like particle vaccinations, antigen valence and density are finely regulated. Antigen delivery can be controlled and sustained via newer biomaterials. New adjuvants can activate specific innate immune pathways. As the mechanisms of immune response durability become more apparent, we can construct vaccines strategically to provide durable vaccine-induced protection with fewer doses.

(Dr. Vipin M. Vashishtha is past convener, IAP Committee on Immunisation, and director and paediatrician, Mangla Hospital and Research Centre, Bijnor. Dr. Puneet Kumar is a clinician, Kumar Child Clinic, New Delhi, with a special interest in infectious diseases and vaccination.)

A sun-baked pool that used to be a perennial water supply in Mana Pools National Park, Zimbabwe. TSVANGIRAYI MUKWAZHI/AP

El Nino impact leaves Malawi and region on the edge of a hunger crisis

Press Trust of India

The southern African nation of Malawi has declared a state of disaster caused by drought in 23 of its 28 districts. Its president has also said Malawi urgently needs more than $200 million in humanitarian assistance, less than a month after neighbouring Zambia also appealed for help.

A third country, Zimbabwe, has also seen much of its crops decimated and is considering following suit and declaring a drought disaster, underscoring concerns raised by the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) late last year that numerous nations in southern Africa were on the brink of a hunger crisis because of the impact of the ongoing El Niño weather phenomenon.

The WFP said there were already nearly 50 million people in southern and parts of central Africa facing food insecurity even before one of the driest spells in decades hit.

Last month was the driest February in 40 years for Zambia and Zimbabwe, according to the WFP's seasonal monitor while Malawi, Mozambique, and parts of Angola had "severe rainfall deficits." Millions in southern Africa rely on the food they grow to survive. Corn, the region's staple food, has been badly affected by the drought.

The WFP said there were nearly 50 million people in southern and central Africa facing food insecurity even before the driest spells in decades hit

El Niño is a natural, recurring weather phenomenon that affects weather worldwide, including causing below-average rainfall in southern Africa. Some scientists say climate change is making El Niños stronger and their impacts more extreme. The 2015-2016 El Niño brought a severe drought to southern Africa, the region's worst in 35 years, for example.

Before the national disaster announcements by Malawi and Zambia, the WFP and USAID had already launched a programme to feed 2.7 million people in rural Zimbabwe facing food shortages – nearly 20% of that country's population.

British charity Oxfam said this month that more than 6 million people in Zambia – 30% of its population – are now facing acute food shortages and malnutrition, with the next crop growing season a year away.

Malawian President Lazarus Chakwera said he had been on a tour of his country to discover the extent of its drought crisis, and a preliminary assessment by the government found about 44% of Malawi's corn crop had failed or been affected, and 2 million households were directly impacted. Malawi has been repeatedly hit by weather extremes in recent years.

In early 2022, tropical storms and floods contributed to Malawi's worst outbreak of the water-borne disease, cholera. More than 1,200 people died in the outbreak that lasted for months, according to the World Health Organisation.

Zambia is also currently experiencing a major cholera outbreak as well.

THE SCIENCE QUIZ

Spacetime continuum

Vasudevan Mukunth

Please send in your answers to science@thehindu.co.in

QUESTION 1
When a smooth circular object is placed in the path of light, its shadow behind will be dark except for a small bright spot at the centre. What is the spot called? Its discovery in 1818 was a strong indicator that light behaves like a wave.

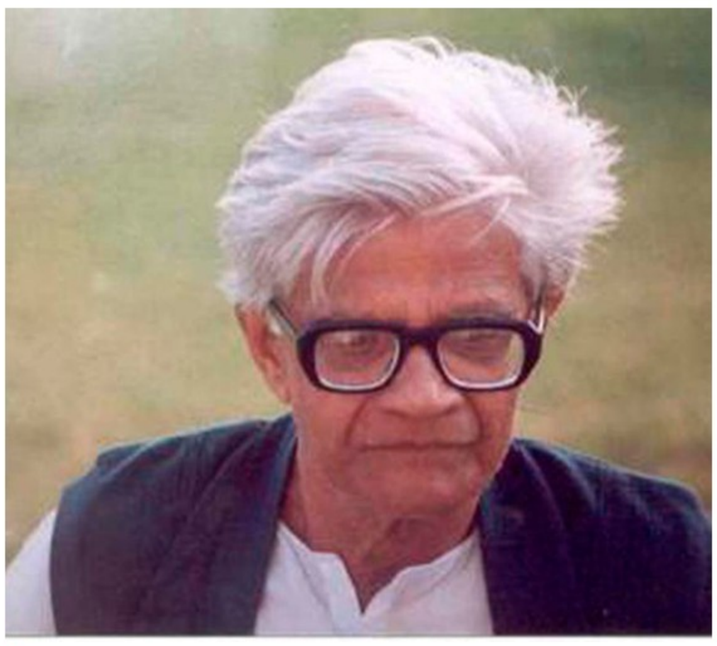
QUESTION 2
Backed by discoveries like those in Q1, pointing to the possibility that light can behave like a wave, scientists assumed space should be filled with a medium the wave can pass through. Name the famous 1887 experiment that looked for this medium but ended up disproving its existence.

QUESTION 3
The answers to Q1 and Q2 plus other events disrupted what scientists believed they knew of light and space. In 1898, a French mathematician first combined space and time into spacetime and advanced some principles that explained the discrepancy in Q2. Name him.

QUESTION 4
The spacetime of our universe has four dimensions – three of space and one of time. What is the name for a point on this spacetime?

QUESTION 5
Mathematically, spacetime is a _____. This means a very small portion of spacetime will appear flat when zoomed in but can be part of a curved surface when zoomed out – like how the earth appears flat to someone standing on the ground but whose spheroidal shape becomes apparent when standing on a mountain. Fill in the blank.

Answers to March 21 quiz:
1. Observatory that studies gamma-ray sources from low-earth orbit – **Ans: Fermi Gamma-ray Space Telescope**
2. Probe launched by Japan propelled in orbit by a solar sail – **Ans: IKAROS**
3. India's first dedicated space telescope – **Ans: AstroSat**
4. ESA observatory launched in 2013 for astrometry – **Ans: Gaia**
5. The telescope among NASA's flagship four that observes X-rays – **Ans: Chandra**
Visual: **Lyman Spitzer**
First contact: Muhammed Shahid Suri | Yogapriya K. | K.N. Viswanathan | Srinivasan G. | Alex Abraham



Visual: Name this Indian physicist who provided the first, if also incomplete, proof that the general theory of relativity allowed spacetime to become infinitely curved in some places. IUCAA

For feedback and suggestions
for 'Science', please write to **science@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Daily page'

'Don't issue NOCs for commercial land conversion in Kodagu'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Save Kodagu and Cauvery Campaign has said that one of the reasons for the water shortage in Bengaluru is the rampant and unchecked commercial land conversion and urbanisation of Kodagu, and argued against giving No Objection Certificates (NOCs) for such conversion in the district that is the birthplace of the river.

Col C.P. Muthanna (retd), coordinator, speaking at a press conference here, said that Kodagu is the principal catchment of the Cauvery that provides 70% of water to 130 lakh Bengalureans.

"Gram panchayats should not issue NOCs for land conversion for commercial purposes. Our legislators should urge Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to issue strict directions. This should be followed by placing a moratorium on further expansion of Bengaluru," Col. Muthanna said.

He said that if the present trend of commercial conversion continues in Kodagu, then within a few years, Gonikoppal, Ponnampet, and Virajpet will become a single large city like Mysuru.

Madikeri, Kushalnagar, and Somwarpet will become likewise in North Kodagu.

"If we have two Mysuru-sized cities in Kodagu, then all the Cauvery water will be required within Kodagu and the 70% of water supply to Bengaluru will be cut off," he said.

Environmentalists have said that one of the reasons for the water shortage in Bengaluru is the urbanisation of Kodagu. FILE PHOTO

Case against tanker owner for selling water

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A private water tanker driver has been booked for illegally selling water meant to be distributed free.

Invoking the Disaster Management Act, 2005, the Bengaluru Urban district administration has commandeered 200 water tankers and handed them over to the BWSSB and the BBMP, who are supplying water for free in pockets dominated by the poor in the outer zones, not served by the Cauvery water.

One such water tanker so commandeered was owned by one Sunil. The BWSSB had supplied him water and directed him to distribute it for free to a pocket in Ward Number 130. However, Sunil allegedly sold the water to a commercial property at Mallasandra on Shettyhalli Main Road Ward Number 14.

The BWSSB officials lodged a complaint in the Bagalagunte police station against Sunil, following which the police have booked him.

Demand and supply: People collect drinking water from a tanker owing to the water crisis in Bengaluru. PTI

Apartments can now sell 50% of treated water from STPs

Bangalore Apartments' Federation is in talks with CREDAI - Bengaluru to sell excess treated water to construction projects, and also with the BWSSB to fill lakes

WATER WOES

K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj
BENGALURU

The State government has for the first time allowed treated water from localised sewage treatment plants (STPs) inside apartment complexes and gated communities to be sold on a commercial basis.

On March 22, the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) issued an order allowing residential communities to sell 50% of treated STP water on a commercial basis. The water has to be compliant with the National Green Tribunal (NGT) standards, and can be used for any purpose, except in food and medicine industries.

This move comes amidst the board banning the use of potable water for non-essential purposes, mandating the use of treated water for construction and other purposes.

Presently, the rule mandates that all apartments with over 20 flats built after 2016 should have an STP. According to a study by the Bangalore Apartments' Federation (BAF), there are over 3,500 STPs in residential communities, which add up to 720 million litres per day (MLD) capacity to treat sewage every day. "After using treated water for flushing and gardening within the communities, our estimates suggest that at least 300 MLD are being wasted, and can now be used effectively," said Satish Mallya, vice-president, BAF.

Earlier, there was a zero discharge policy. A big part of treated water was wasted by being let into storm-water drains (SWDs), where it mixed with untreated sewage before entering nearby lakes. "To prevent this, the BAF had been lobbying political parties to allow us to take the treated water out of our communities. It found a mention in the Congress manifesto for the 2023 Assembly polls. Given that the party came to power, we had been pushing for the same," Mr. Mallya said.

The BAF is holding talks with the Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Association of India (CREDAI) - Bengaluru to see if they will buy the excess treated water from residential communities.

The BWSSB has banned the use of potable water for construction, and has also issued an order commandeering all borewells at construction sites. However, several builders complain that STPs of the BWSSB – 36 of them – are far. The logistics of fetching treated water are challenging. In this context, the BAF hopes the 3,500 STPs can come in handy for construction projects.

While the BWSSB sells one kilolitre of treated water for ₹10, the BAF is yet to decide on a price.

V. Ram Prasath Manohar, Chairman, BWSSB, said the board will partner with the BAF, and will facilitate the process of sale of treated water. "Presently, the best use for treated water from residential communities is to supply it to construction projects nearby. We will facilitate this," he said.

The BWSSB and the BAF are in talks over using treated water to fill lakes. "We won't be able to pay for the treated water. But the BAF is ready to provide it for free. The details are being worked out," Mr. Manohar said.

Fact sheet

Total number of decentralised STPs in apartments and gated communities	Total installed capacity of these STPs	Treated water (as per NGT standards) available to be sold
around 3,500	720 million litres per day (MLD)	over 300 MLD

This Holi day in city was almost dry

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Amidst a severe water crisis, many opted for dry Holi celebrations in the city on Monday. Owing to a ban on the use of potable water for Holi parties, most restaurants which had announced pool dances and rain dance parties had cancelled them.

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) had served notices to at least two top-end restaurants, which had announced pool parties and rain dance for Holi parties. The two hotels had cancelled the parties.

However, taking advantage of jurisdictional issues, parties moved to just outside the civic limits where the BWSSB ban did not apply.

However, a senior official said the resort was outside their jurisdiction and couldn't enforce the ban.

Meanwhile, V. Ram Prasath Manohar, Chairman, BWSSB, said that while celebrating Holi was not an issue, commercialising it and organising parties was not right, especially amidst a water crisis. "If anyone complains and brings to our notice of any such parties where potable water was wasted, we will take stringent action," he said.

PHOTO FEATURE ON
» E-PAPER PAGE 5

Water crisis unlikely to affect BBP

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The water crisis is unlikely to have an impact on the Bannerghatta Biological Park (BBP), which is located on the outskirts of the city.

The BBP is home to around 99 species and more than 2,300 animals.

"Historically, during the summer, there is a shortage of water in the Bannerghatta region. However, we have been tapping into our borewells and surface waterbodies inside the BBP to address this issue," said A.V. Surya Sen, Deputy Conservator of Forests and Executive Director, BBP.

The BBP has eight lakes. During summer, tankers are used to supply water from the lakes to various areas across the park.

"So far, we have not purchased water from outside. This year too, we will manage with whatever water resources we have. I don't foresee any challenge," Mr. Sen said.

The BBP is undertaking measures to conserve water, and recycle some of the water.

"We are reducing water consumption. We are also recycling some, like for instance the water used in the hippopotamus enclosure and in the aviary. Only a few species use a lot of water. Otherwise, water consumption is less," he said.

Armed and ready: Training skills of all Hoysala police patrol staff upgraded

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The recent attempted robbery and shoot-out at a jewellery shop in Kodigehalli and the quick action by the Hoysala team has revealed how the training skills of the staff had been upgraded and armed with weapons to handle any eventualities.

City Police Commissioner B. Dayananda said that all the 241 Hoysala teams have been upgraded with the Head Constable to Assistant Police Sub Inspector as patrol officers, along with training to handle the situation with arms. The Police Sub Inspectors will have to replace the ASI as patrol officers in case the latter is not available for duty.

The Hoysala patrol vehicles have been fitted with advanced wireless system, while the staff have been provided with first-aid box, body cameras and reflective jackets to improve performance.

The Hoysala staff in both the shifts have been trained on how to tackle different situations tactically instead of the conventional way of visiting and reporting the incident to the jurisdictional station.

Reduced response time

Elaborating on this, Mr. Dayananda said that the ASI and officials above the rank are equipped to handle the situation better and more responsibly in tasks ranging from talking to the complainant, responding and decision-making. Due to this, the response time has been reduced to seven minutes, he said.

"Arming the staff and training them accordingly is need of the hour in the present crime scenario of the city. In addition to this, the PSI and above officers and even the night beat constable have been made to carry the arms compulsorily. This is part of the uniform and they must carry the weapons," Mr. Dayananda said, adding that the night beat constables have been given pump action rifle which is more effective and advanced than the conventional 303 rifles. The beat constables have been ordered to pick up the weapon and drop it at the station compulsorily so that they could brief the station in-charge. This is to make them come to the station on regular basis without fail, Mr. Dayananda added.

Mandatory patrol duty

Apart from upgrading the Hoysala vehicle with advanced wireless system, provision of first-aid box, body cameras and reflective jackets to the staff has improved the performance of the patrolling team effectively, he said.

The new officials of the rank of Inspector and above have been asked to go on patrol duty compulsorily to understand the system. This will help them to supervise in a better manner, he said.

The ACP in-charge of the Hoysala vehicles has been asked to inspect the vehicles on a regular basis to keep them fit and fine.

Reacting to the new beat system, a police officer part of the Hoysala team called it "a challenging task".

"The officer in-charge has been burdened with loads of work with high expectations," he said.

Three arrested for assaulting neighbour over parking row

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The K.S. Layout police arrested three persons on the charge of assaulting their neighbour and his family members over a parking row in Pragathipura on Sunday night.

As the fight went viral on social media, Mysuru-Kodagu MP Prathap Simha termed it a communal clash with a tweet and tagged Bengaluru Police Commissioner B. Dayananda seeking action.

The jurisdictional police contained the fight and clarified that it was a fight between two families and not communal as depicted.

According to the police, the fight started over the parking of an autorickshaw in front of a house, which the residents objected to. Heated arguments ensued which took an ugly turn as both the families hurled abuses followed by the attack. The sparring parties were identified as Sukumar and Syed Talha. "There is no communal angle as of now," Shiva Prakash Devaraju, Deputy Commissioner of Police (South), said.

The officer said there was no involvement of other people, but added that some onlookers had gathered at the scene because of the heated arguments and commotion.

The police have registered an FIR based on a complaint filed by Sukumar and arrested three people. "We are further investigating to ascertain the involvement of others," a police officer said.

Timings
BENGALURU

TUESDAY, MAR. 26		
RISE	06:20	SET 18:31
RISE	19:25	SET 06:50
WEDNESDAY, MAR. 27		
RISE	06:19	SET 18:31
RISE	20:11	SET 07:26
THURSDAY, MAR. 28		
RISE	06:18	SET 18:31
RISE	21:01	SET 08:02

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	35	24
Mysuru	35	21
Bengaluru	35	21

Bengaluru Today
35°C A dry weather to continue. Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be warm. Night also will be pleasant.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
34°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be warm and uneasy. Night will be pleasant.

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THE HINDU
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Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

The international caps earned by Sunil Chhetri

149 Sunil Chhetri has so far scored 93 goals and won 11 trophies for the country. He will be appearing in his 150th international match in the 2026 FIFA World Cup Qualifier against Afghanistan. PTI

The number of people Sweden's Ericsson is set to lay off

1,200 Ericsson said the layoffs were a part of cost cuts announced earlier this year, citing a challenging mobile networks market and lower volumes in 2024. REUTERS

Irrigation projects in Marathwada where the water level is down

750 The water level in 750 minor irrigation projects in Maharashtra's Marathwada region stood at 12.92%, down from 34.28% at this time last year. The lowest is in Jalna. PTI

Bodies of Rohingya refugees recovered off the coast of Indonesia

11 The bodies were recovered after their boat believed to be carrying around 150 people capsized last week. From November to January, 1,752 Rohingya refugees landed in Indonesian provinces of Aceh and North Sumatra. AFP

The U.S.'s investment to slash emissions in the industrial sector

6 in $ billion. It is the largest-ever U.S. investment to decarbonise domestic industry to fight climate change. The industrial sector is responsible for 25% of all the nation's emissions. AP

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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On campaigning in the name of religion

What does Section 123(3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 stipulate? What about the Model Code of Conduct laid down by the Election Commission of India? Have the Courts ever convicted leaders for corrupt electoral practices?

EXPLAINER

Rangarajan. R

The story so far:
Recently the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) lodged a complaint with the Election Commission of India (ECI) against Rahul Gandhi for hurting the sentiments of Hindus through his remark on 'shakti'. The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), in turn, filed a counter complaint against the Prime Minister for appealing to religious sentiments during his campaign on the same issue.

What does the law say?
Section 123(3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (RP Act) provides that appeals by a candidate, or any other person with the consent of a candidate, to vote or refrain from voting on the ground of his religion, race, caste, community or language is a corrupt electoral practice. Section 123(3A) denounces any attempt by a candidate to promote feelings of enmity or hatred among citizens on these grounds during elections. The RP Act further provides that anyone found guilty of corrupt electoral practice can be debarred from contesting elections for a maximum period of up to six years.

What does the MCC provide?
The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) for the guidance of political parties and candidates is a set of norms which has evolved with the consensus of political parties. They have consented to abide by the principles embodied in the said code. It binds them to respect and observe it in its letter and spirit. This code, which began to be implemented strictly in the 1990s, provides that no party or candidate shall indulge in any activity which may aggravate existing differences or create mutual hatred or cause tension between different castes, religious or linguistic communities. It also provides that there shall be no appeal to caste or communal feelings for securing votes. Mosques, churches, temples or other places of worship shall not be used as a forum for election propaganda. Though the MCC does not have any statutory backing, it has come to acquire strength in the past three decades because of its strict enforcement by the ECI.

Secular values: A view of the Election Commission of India in New Delhi. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

What has been the history?
It is pertinent to note that before 1961, Section 123(3) of the RP Act provided that 'systemic' appeal by a candidate on the grounds of religion, race, caste or community will amount to a corrupt electoral practice. However, in order to curb communal, fissiparous and separatist tendencies, the word 'systemic' was omitted through an amendment in 1961. This meant that even a stray appeal for success in the elections on the ground of one's religion or narrow communal affiliation would be viewed with disfavour by the law.

There have been innumerable instances in the past where various parties and its leaders have blatantly appealed for votes in the name of religion. There are leaders across political parties against whom cases have been registered under the RP Act and the Indian Penal Code in this regard. However, the only notable leader who was convicted by the Supreme Court for this corrupt electoral practice was Bal Thackeray of Shiv Sena in the year 1995. The ECI on such occasions at best bars leaders from campaigning, for violation of the MCC, for a short period of two to three days.

What has the Supreme Court ruled?
In *Abhiram Singh versus C. D. Commachen* (2017) a seven-judge Bench by a majority of 4:3 held that candidates shall not appeal for votes on the basis of not just his/her religion but also that of the voters. The majority view provided a 'purposive interpretation' to Section 123(3) rather than just a literal one thereby rendering any appeal in the name of religion of even the voters as a corrupt electoral practice. The elections to Parliament or State legislatures are a secular exercise; constitutional ethos forbids the mixing of religious considerations with the secular functions of the State. Religion should remain a matter of personal faith.

What is needed?
Political parties and candidates are likely to raise legitimate concerns of citizens faced by them on the basis of traits having origin in religion, caste, community or language in a democratic election process. However, it should be to only address their grievances through appropriate policies without jeopardising the secular fabric and fraternity of the country. Any appeal in the name of religion only results in the further polarisation of our multi-religious society.

Places of worship have always been used overtly and covertly as a forum for canvass. Religious leaders have thrown their weight behind candidates of various parties. These practices should ideally be avoided in order to ensure that politics and religion are not mixed up. However, the primary responsibility lies with political party leaders and candidates. Their campaigns on the basis of religion not only disturbs the secular fabric of our polity but is also a clear violation of law. The ECI and courts should devise mechanisms for swift action against those violating the law in this regard.

Rangarajan R is a former IAS officer and author of 'Polity Simplified'. He currently trains civil-service aspirants at 'Officers IAS Academy'. Views expressed are personal.

THE GIST

- The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) lodged a complaint with the Election Commission of India (ECI) against Rahul Gandhi for hurting the sentiments of Hindus through his remark on 'shakti'.
- In *Abhiram Singh versus C. D. Commachen* (2017) a seven-judge Bench by a majority of 4:3 held that candidates shall not appeal for votes on the basis of not just his/her religion but also that of the voters.
- Places of worship have always been used overtly and covertly as a forum for canvass. Religious leaders have thrown their weight behind candidates of various parties. These practices should ideally be avoided in order to ensure that politics and religion are not mixed up.

What is the district election management plan?

What goes into a smooth and efficient electoral process? How are electoral booths prepared before polling?

Ravi Mittal
Rajat Bansal

The conduct of elections has become increasingly complex and multifaceted, requiring meticulous planning and execution to ensure a free, fair, and inclusive electoral process. A cornerstone of this planning process is the District Election Management Plan (DEMP), a comprehensive document that uses statistics and analysis to ensure the smooth conduct of elections.

When is the DEMP prepared?
As per the Election Commission of India, the DEMP is to be prepared at least six months before the tentative poll day. However, many things become clearer as the election is notified, so it becomes necessary to revise/update the plan occasionally. Executing the DEMP requires a collaborative effort involving election officials, administrative authorities, law enforcement agencies etc. Regular interactions with political parties and media are also planned to brief them on electoral rules.

What are the elements of DEMP?
The plan starts with a district profile that serves as the foundation of the electoral strategy. This includes a political map outlining constituencies, key demographic and infrastructure statistics, a brief on the district's administrative setup and socio-economic features.

The plan encompasses detailed strategies for improving the availability and accessibility of polling stations, ensuring that all stations have essential facilities like ramps, electricity, lighting, drinking water, toilets, and internet connectivity. Special attention is given to voters with disabilities (PwD) and senior citizens through help desks, 24/7 control rooms, home voting options, and advanced postal ballot voting for essential service personnel. Another critical component of the DEMP is the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) plan, which focuses on increasing electoral participation. It involves analysing voter turnout data to identify polling stations with below-average or significantly low turnout and tailoring activities to address these issues. Activities under the SVEEP plan include the use of social media, engagement with various community and youth organisations, and organising events leading up to the poll day to increase awareness and participation.

Additionally, DEMP outlines a comprehensive strategy for the planning, training, welfare, and deployment of election personnel. It highlights the importance of creating a poll personnel database, categorising available personnel by cadre and group while assessing their requirement and strategies to address gaps in personnel needs across various election roles. The force deployment plan requires detailed planning in coordination with the district police, including vulnerability mapping of polling stations based on past disturbances and voter turnout. The plan also includes training district-level teams to enforce the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) and providing a training program for all election personnel to ensure they have the necessary skills and knowledge.

What about EVMs?
Material management is a crucial component of the DEMP involving procuring 61 essential items, including indelible ink, seals, stamps, stationary and statutory forms. These items are categorised based on the level at which they are to be procured (State/U.T. or district level), with timelines ranging from two-to-three weeks to four months before the election. Similarly, Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) management is crucial for maintaining the integrity of the electoral process, with plans necessary for secure storage and availability of EVMs and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trails (VVPATs), including plans for their transportation and maintenance.

The DEMP enhances the voting experience by making it more organised and accessible for everyone. Beyond elections, its approach of meticulous planning, collaboration and transparency offers lessons for broader governance. It emphasises the importance of advanced planning, data-driven decisions, and stakeholder collaboration to tackle challenges effectively.

Ravi Mittal is District Collector, Jashpur, Chhattisgarh. Rajat Bansal is an IAS officer serving in Chhattisgarh.

THE GIST

- A cornerstone of the election planning process is the District Election Management Plan (DEMP).
- The plan encompasses detailed strategies for improving the availability and accessibility of polling stations, ensuring that all stations have essential facilities like ramps, electricity, lighting, drinking water, toilets, and internet connectivity.
- The DEMP enhances the voting experience by making it more organised and accessible for everyone.

Janardhana Reddy rejoins BJP, merges his KRPP with saffron party

The mining baron says merger has been made without any conditions and that he will function as an ordinary worker; he had formally quit the BJP by floating his own political party in Dec. 2022

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

G. Janardhana Reddy greeting senior BJP leader B.S. Yediyurappa after joining the party in Bengaluru on Monday. ANI

Mining baron and Kalyana Rajya Pragathi Paksha (KRPP) MLA G. Janardhana Reddy, who has several pending CBI cases against him, on Monday merged his party with the Bharatiya Janata Party and formally rejoined the saffron party along with his wife Aruna Lakshmi and other followers.

Though Mr. Reddy had formally quit the BJP by floating his own political outfit in December 2022 ahead of the previous Assembly elections, in reality he had disassociated himself from the BJP for more than a decade, ever since legal issues related to mining had impacted his political position and relations with the party.

Soon after rejoining the party in the presence of veteran leader B.S. Yediyurappa, flanked by his old associate and MP candidate from Ballari and former Minister B. Sriramulu, Mr. Reddy said: "Looking at my friends and well-wishers here, I do not feel that I am coming to BJP office after 13 years. In fact, I feel as though I had gone out of this office just yesterday and returning today." It is learnt that the BJP leadership had engaged in a series of meetings with Mr. Reddy in the last one week to woo him.

Indicating this, Mr. Reddy, who is the sole MLA from his political outfit, said that Union Home Minister Amit Shah had invited him to Delhi to meet him and offered an invitation to join the party instead of providing an outside support.

Making it clear that his joining the BJP or merging his party with the BJP was completely "unconditional", Mr. Reddy said, "I have come to the BJP solely to work towards realising the dream of a large number of people that Narendra Modi should become prime minister again."

He said, "The god and the BJP have given me all I could ask for at a young age. I have seen all the ups and downs in life. Now I do not need any position. I will work as an ordinary party worker and handle whatever the responsibility the party gives me."

Known as a strategist, Mr. Reddy rejoining the BJP is believed to help the party particularly in the areas in and around Ballari which is his home district.

Welcoming Mr. Reddy into the party, BJP State President B. Y. Vijayendra said his re-entry had boosted the party's strength.

Thomas John joins

Meanwhile, Mr. Thomas John, son of Congress leader and former Minister T. John, also joined the BJP on Monday.

Responding to Mr. Reddy's re-entry into the BJP, Labour Minister Santosh Lad referred to the mining cases, and said, "Once a person joins the BJP, irrespective of the controversies, he or she becomes all washed and cleaned up."

Reddy's homecoming is likely to benefit Sriramulu and BJP in Ballari

Kumar Buradikatti
KALABURAGI

Thick friends G. Janardhana Reddy and B. Sriramulu — who were once part of the BJP for long — are now together again after Mr. Reddy merged his party with the saffron outfit. FILE PHOTO

The re-entry of Gali Janardhana Reddy, the founder of Kalyana Rajya Pragathi Paksha (KRPP) and its only MLA, into BJP seems to have infused a new enthusiasm in the party rank and file in and around Ballari ahead of the Lok Sabha elections.

The BJP leadership was initially cold to Mr. Reddy's open overtures. His alleged voting for Congress in the recently concluded Rajya Sabha election further pointed to the widening gap between the BJP and him, but the mining baron has now been embraced by the party.

Win-win situation

Mr. Reddy's inner circles believe that his association with BJP will give him relief from a bunch of criminal cases, including serious ones related to illegal mining, filed by central agencies.

From the BJP's point of view, Mr. Reddy's return would help it gain the lost ground in and around Ballari. It was with the help of Mr. Reddy that the BJP could make inroads into Ballari, once the Congress' stronghold.

However, it subsequently lost ground after Mr. Reddy got entangled in a series of illegal mining cases and landed in jail. Mr. Reddy's absence in Ballari following a court order and the prolonged judicial proceedings paved the way for Congress resurgence here.

When Mr. Reddy was gradually sidelined and eventually forced to quit BJP, his close friend and prominent Valmiki leader B. Sriramulu did not follow him. This had shattered Mr. Reddy's plans of building his new political outfit on two pillars - his money power and Mr. Sriramulu's community support. KRPP's performance in the last Assembly election was dismal, with him being the only victor.

His associates say that combination of Mr. Reddy's money and Mr. Sriramulu's community support now with the BJP will create a scenario similar to what existed in 2008 Assembly election in which BJP emerged as a single largest party with 110 seats.

Though much water has flown under the Tungabhadra since, the Reddy-Sriramulu combination is expected to make a difference in Ballari, Koppal, Raichur and Chitradurga segments. It is certain a boon to Mr. Sriramulu, the BJP's candidate for Ballari, who had lost the last Assembly elections with a margin of over 29,000 votes.

His influence has eroded: Congress

The Hindu Bureau
KALABURAGI

Congress sources said that G. Janardhana Reddy's influence is not comparable to what it was 10 years ago and will not make much impact in Lok Sabha elections.

"His party KRPP contested from 40 seats in the last Assembly elections and got only around 1,45,000 votes. He was the only candidate to win the election with a margin of just 6,000 votes. Since he had said that he had nothing to do with the BJP in his election campaign, the OBC community members supported him. Otherwise, he would have lost. If he was so powerful, how could his wife suffer a humiliating defeat against a Congress candidate with a margin of over 37,000 votes? His weakness is the reason for his voluntary approach to the BJP. He is neither helpful to BJP nor a threat to Congress now," claimed a Congress source in Ballari.

Cong. urges EC to stop broadcast of Yaduveer's radio event

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

The Congress has urged the Election Commission to immediately stop the broadcast of a programme by BJP candidate for Mysuru-Kodagu Lok Sabha constituency Yaduveer on a radio channel in Mysuru.

In a letter to the Chief Electoral Officer of Karnataka in Bengaluru, Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee spokesperson H.A. Venkatesh pointed out that the scion of Mysuru's erstwhile royal family Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar broadcasts a programme on Mysuru's 104.8 Radio Mirchi channel.

Mr. Yaduveer participates in a weekly radio programme 'Mysore diaries' on the radio channel. In the programme, he talks about the history of the erstwhile Mysore kingdom in the form of an interview called "Stories of the kings from the mouth of king", Mr. Venkatesh said while claiming that advertisements about the programme are also broadcast on radio from time to time.

"Though there is nothing wrong talking about kings as individuals, but as Mr. Yaduveer is a BJP candidate in the Lok Sabha elections, it amounts to violating the election code of conduct," Mr Venkatesh claimed. "As Yaduveer's words could influence voters, the broadcast of the programme should be banned immediately," said Mr. Venkatesh in his letter to the Election Commission.

BJP petitions EC against Minister's remarks

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Bharatiya Janata Party on Monday filed a complained with the Election Commission over Kannada and Culture Minister Shivaraj Tangadagi reportedly asking the Congress workers to "slap the students and youth" if they shout slogans in favour of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

A BJP delegation led by party State general secretary P. Rajiv alleged that the Minister had made such remarks at a preparatory meeting in Karatagi of Koppal district.

The Minister had made the remarks while saying that the Modi government had failed to create more jobs and that youth who were asking for jobs were being advised to sell *pakodas*. The BJP has maintained that the remarks amount to provoking the Congress workers to target the youth.

Kumaraswamy likely to be announced as candidate for Mandya LS seat today

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

BJP leader Tejasvi Surya meeting former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy in Bengaluru on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Janata Dal (Secular) will announce its candidates for Mandya, Hassan, and Kolar Lok Sabha constituencies after the party's core election committee meeting on Tuesday. While former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy is set to be the party's candidate for Mandya, a formal announcement is expected after the meeting.

Seat sharing

The party is likely to name Prajwal Revanna, MP and son of former Minister H.D. Revanna, for the Hassan seat, and Mallesh Babu, the party's defeated candidate from Bangarpet in the Assembly elections held last year, for Kolar constituency. In the seat-sharing agreement with BJP, the JD (S) will contest from three constituencies and the saffron party will contest from 25 seats.

Party sources said that while the leaders from Channapatna, which Mr. Kumaraswamy currently represents in the Assembly, were divided over Mr. Kumaraswamy contesting from Mandya, eventually the former Chief Minister told the gathering on Monday that it was "inevitable" to "take some decisions in the best interest of the party."

He is learnt to have told the Channapatna leaders that the time had come to protect the party, and that their cooperation was required. He said that "some tough decisions are to be taken for the party's sake" and party workers should agree to support him. The former Chief Minister also assured that his relationship with Channapatna and Ramanagara will remain intact.

Meanwhile, in an effort to bring synergy between the two allies on the ground, Mr. Kumaraswamy asked workers and leaders not to create confusion and air misunderstandings, if any, in public.

He has asked workers to use photographs of leaders from both parties, besides using flags and shawls of both parties in all public functions. BJP leaders contesting elections including Tejaswi Surya (Bengaluru South) and K. Sudhakar (Chickballapur) visited Mr. Kumaraswamy. MP Karadi Sanganna, who has been denied ticket this time, also met him.

CM takes a break at a resort in H.D. Kote

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Siddaramaiah

With hectic Lok Sabha election campaign just around the corner, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has chosen to take a break from the routine by camping at a resort on the banks of river Kapila in H.D. Kote near here for two to three days.

Mr. Siddaramaiah, who left Mysuru after addressing a meeting of party leaders from Mysuru, Kodagu and Chamarajanagar districts at a hotel in the city on Sunday evening, is expected to return only on Wednesday for an event organised in Mysuru to mark the entry of leaders from BJP and JD(S) to the party fold.

Giving company to Mr. Siddaramaiah at the private resort, which is also situated near the Bandipur and Nagarhole national parks, are Ministers incharge of Mysuru and Chamarajanagar districts H.C. Mahadevappa and K. Venkatesh, both considered to be close friends of the Chief Minister for long years, besides former Hunsur MLA H.P. Manjunath.

A source close to Mr. Siddaramaiah said the Chief Minister had a busy travel schedule over the last few days. "With campaigning for Lok Sabha elections scheduled to begin soon, he needed a break to recharge his energies. Even if he stays in Mysuru city, he will not get a chance to rewind. So, he may have preferred to take a break with some of his friends," the source said.

Mr. Siddaramaiah's schedule is expected to be packed with election campaign meetings till the first week of May.

Polling in Karnataka is scheduled to be held on April 26 and May 7.

Sources did not rule out the possibility of electoral strategies figuring in the talks Mr. Siddaramaiah has with his close friends during his sojourn. Incidentally, H.D. Kote, where the Chief Minister is camping, is part of Chamarajanagar reserved Lok Sabha segment for which Mr. Mahadevappa's son Sunil Bose is tipped to become the Congress candidate.

Even if Mr. Siddaramaiah says that the Congress will strive equally in all 28 Lok Sabha constituencies of the State, Mysuru-Kodagu and Chamarajanagar will be of special political significance to the Chief Minister because he hails from the region.

'Some BJP leaders want Shettar to face defeat'

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

The former Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar is being made a sacrificial goat by the BJP high command that has asked him to fight the Lok Sabha elections from Belagavi, the former Deputy Chief Minister Laxman Savadi said in Athani on Monday.

"Some BJP leaders are upset with Mr. Shettar for quitting the BJP and joining the Congress last year. They wanted to punish him for that. They know that he will not win from Belagavi, that is why they have given him ticket. They want him to suffer defeat and withdraw from politics. This is the holy month of Ramzan and Mr. Shettar is the bali ka bakra," Mr. Savadi, who too, like Mr. Shettar did, quit the BJP to join the Congress, told reporters. "I believe, therefore, that by choosing Mr. Shettar, the BJP has insulted the Angadi family in a way," Mr. Savadi said. The BJP leaders persuaded Mr. Shettar to rejoin the BJP not because they have any regard for his political career.

"It is because his entry will help some other political leaders. If they really liked him, he should have been allowed to fight from Dharwad, his home constituency, and not Belagavi," he said.

"BJP leaders are aware that there are many aspirants for party ticket from Belagavi. Now, suddenly, Mr. Shettar has been nominated. That is a huge disappointment for dedicated workers," he said.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby informed to the General Public that our client **MANJULA BHASKARAN SALOMON,** D/o Late M. P. Bhaskaran, residing at: No. 126, 2nd Cross, HAL III Stage, New Thippasandra, Indiranagar, Bangalore-5600075 is the sole and absolute owner and she has been in uninterrupted peaceful possession and enjoyment of the Schedule Property, she has lost the original Sale Deed dated 29-12-1977, registered as Document No. 26120/1977-78 of Book-1, Volume-1958, Pages 87 to 88, dated 29-12-1977, in the Office of the Sub Registrar, Shivajinagar, Bangalore, and she has lodged a E- lost Complaint before the Halasur Police Station, Bangalore on 16-01-2024 vide Lost Report No. 0890423/2024. Further the above said our client has lost the Original Rectification Deed dated 06-12-1985, registered as Document No. 2581/1985-86 of Book-1, Volume-2475, Pages 57 to 58, dated 10-12-1985, in the Office of the Sub Registrar, Shivajinagar, Bangalore, Original Allotment letter, Original Possession Memo bearing PR No. 27/1977-78, dated: 15-06-1977, Original Khatha issued by the Bangalore Development Authority vide its No. R.O. 126/1978-89, dated 06-10-1978 in the name of M. P. Bhaskaran and Original Khatha issued by the Bangalore Development Authority, dated 19-12-1989 in the name of Manjula Bhaskaran Salomon in respect to the below mentioned Schedule Property and same are not traceable inspite of her best efforts and the said Original title documents are irretrievably misplaced and she has lodged a E-lost Complaint before the Halasur Police Station, Bangalore on 31-01-2024 vide Lost Report No. 09111037/2024. If anyone finds the above mentioned documents, they are hereby requested to deliver the same to undersigned and if any person were to deal with the said Original title documents in respect to the below mentioned Schedule Property other than our client, such transactions will not bind on our client and if so done they will be doing so at their own risk and cost.

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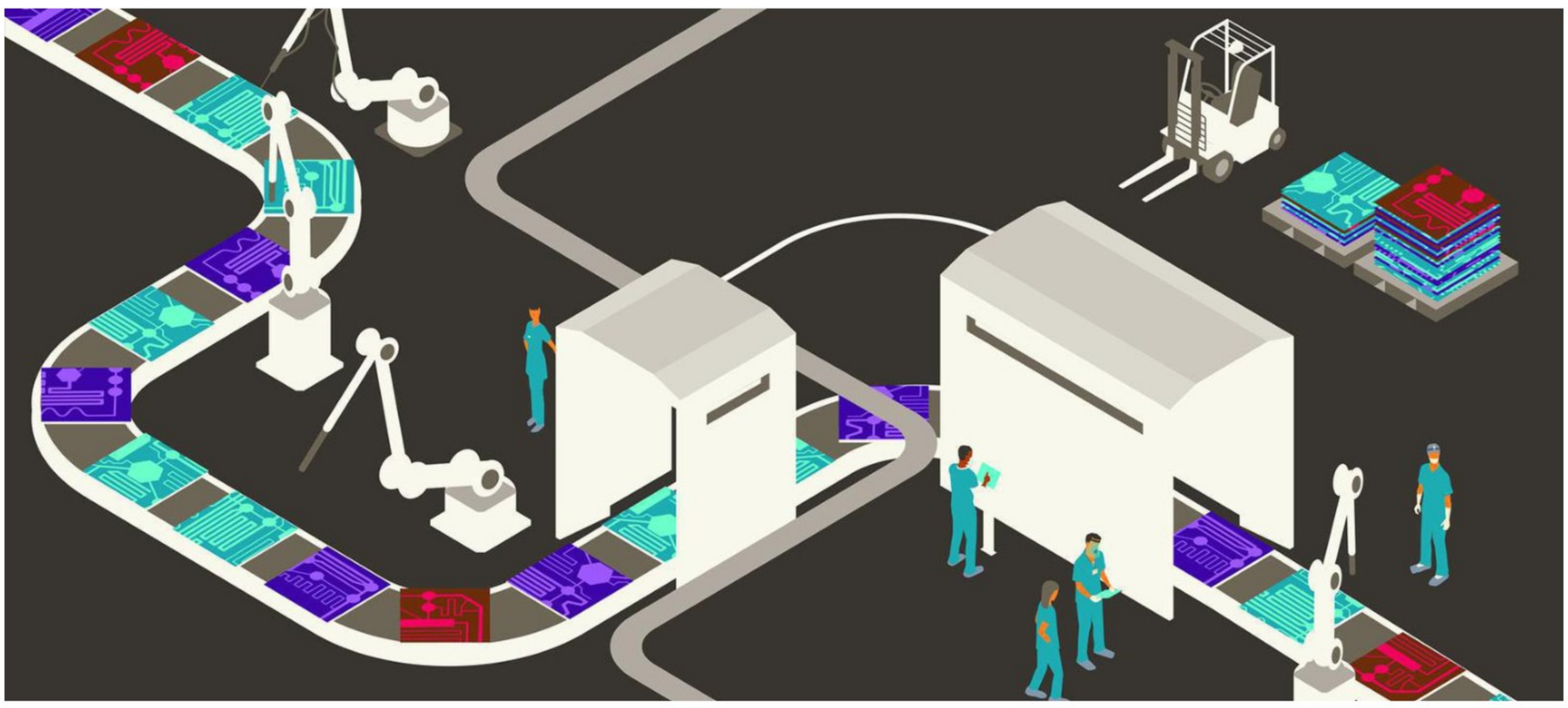


GETTY IMAGES

On semiconductors: how they are made, used and who manufactures them

Semiconductors influence nearly every facet of our lives. Many of the solutions to the 21st century's most important crises — including artificial intelligence, electric vehicles, space exploration, and environmental monitoring — bank on a steady supply of advanced semiconductors

Awanish Pandey

While the physical realm of human activity contains an array of languages, the digital realm is founded on just one fundamental binary language: the 1s and 0s, also called the bits of data. Computers represent these bits as electrical signals and this forms the foundation of modern computing, communication, social media, robotics, and artificial intelligence. The 0s and 1s constantly shape the way we interact with technology and with each other – and the beating heart of this binary revolution is the semiconductor device.

What are semiconductors?

Semiconductors represent a distinct class of materials that possess some of the electrical properties of both conductors and insulators. Like a faucet which can be used to control the flow of water, semiconductors can be used to control the flow of electric currents, and with exquisite precision.

The most important type of semiconductor is the transistor. At the dawn of the era of modern electronics, the first integrated circuits featured four transistors. Together, they controlled the flow of currents in such a way that the circuits could perform simple arithmetic operations. Today, we have single chips boasting billions of transistors.

Fitting so many transistors on a tiny chip no bigger than a fingernail requires extreme precision and a microscopic eye for detail. For instance, the accuracy required is equivalent to dividing a strand of human hair into a thousand segments each of specific width, and further subdividing each segment into a hundred parts. This is why fabricating semiconductors involves cutting-edge technology and science.

How are semiconductors made?

The process starts with an engineer carefully selecting a silicon wafer as the foundation on which the semiconductor will be built. A team puts silicon, sourced from sand, through a meticulous purification process to separate it from other substances, until they have an ultra-pure wafer with impurity levels as low as a few parts per billion. (This percentage is comparable to an error of merely one cm when measuring the earth's diameter.)

Next is the photolithography process – a crucial step that carves the circuit pattern on the wafer. The wafer is coated with a light-sensitive material called a photoresist. Then, a mask is held in front of the wafer and light is shined on it. The mask contains small gaps in the shape of the circuit pattern. The light passes through these gaps and erodes the underlying parts of the photoresist. As a result, the photoresist on the wafer 'acquires' the pattern of the transistor circuits.

Following photolithography, engineers use chemical and/or physical techniques to remove the uncarved parts of the photoresist, leaving behind the circuit's structure on the silicon substrate.

Then they dope the semiconductor, that is, deliberately add impurities to specific parts of the semiconductor to alter its electrical properties, and deposit thin layers of materials such as metals or insulators to the wafer's surface to form electrical connections or insulate components. Then the resulting product is packaged – individual chips are separated, encapsulated, and tested to make sure they're functional and reliable – and integrated into electronic devices.

What does the fabrication landscape look like?

Each step in semiconductor fabrication demands ultra-high precision and harnesses a blend of diverse scientific principles. For example, to make the most advanced transistors, the photolithography process requires a light source emitting electromagnetic radiation at a wavelength of 13.5 nm.

To achieve this, the High NA EUV machine made by the Dutch company ASML uses a cannon to shoot a 50-micrometre blob of liquid tin at 300 km/hr through a vacuum chamber, where laser beams blast it with enough energy to form a plasma that finally emits the requisite wavelength of radiation.

The semiconductor manufacturing process is characterised by specialisation, leading to an oligopoly controlled by companies specialising in specific domains. ASML, a spin-off of Philips, is in fact the sole provider of photolithography machines for cutting-edge semiconductor technology worldwide. The American firms Synopsys and Cadence dominate the software tools the engineers use to design circuits, while the silicon wafer sector is led by Japan's Shin Etsu.

The market for the actual task of fabrication is led by Taiwan's TSMC, with fabrication tools provided by Applied Materials and Lam Research, both headquartered in the U.S. The majority of intellectual property rights are held by British company Arm.

India boasts a leading role in chip design centred in Bengaluru. However, most of the intellectual property rights required to execute these designs are retained either by parent companies or by Arm, relegating India to being a mere user of their products. This setup is akin to the McDonald's business model: while India may host numerous McDonald's outlets, the recipe and supply chain are owned by a parent company headquartered in a different country.

How do semiconductors benefit us?

Smartphones and computers showcase the pinnacle of semiconductor technology but semiconductors influence nearly every facet of our lives. Semiconductors also power 'smart' air-conditioners' ability to regulate the temperature as well as space telescopes' ability to capture both awe-inspiring and scientifically interesting images in the depths of the universe, and many other technologies in between.

Many of the solutions to the 21st century's most important crises – including artificial intelligence, electric vehicles, space exploration, robotics, personalised healthcare, and environmental monitoring – bank on a steady supply of advanced semiconductors, underscoring their importance for the survival of the human race and its aspirations of equitability, sustainability, and justice.

Such semiconductor technology facilities foster innovation, create high-paying jobs, nurture the potential for deep-tech start-ups, and both draw from and feed into advances in materials science, computer engineering, big data, optics, chemical engineering, and chip design, to name a few.

Owing to their role in sectors like defence and automotives, semiconductors have also emerged as a focal point of geopolitical interest, with nations vying to establish semiconductor fabrication facilities within their borders and drawing industry leaders in with a plethora of incentives. The U.S. also imposed sanctions on Chinese tech companies, including bans on the acquisition of cutting-edge ASML equipment and high-end design software, for the same reason. In response, China has intensified efforts to bolster its domestic semiconductor production capabilities to meet local demand.

India, meanwhile, has been trying to use its expertise in design to establish semiconductor manufacturing plants. One hopes this strategic push plus the potential of our youth will translate to numerous opportunities for the country to seize the international semiconductor industry.

Awanish Pandey is an assistant professor at IIT Delhi with the Optics and Photonics Centre.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subrahmanian

"Snoopy, nosy (Dhamodharan, Gudiyattani)"

"A nosy person is an inquisitive person, one who is curious to know all about other people. Like a dog, he sniffs his way to others' affairs out of curiosity. A person who often pokes his nose into the business of others is called a Nosy Parker. Mathew Parker, the Archbishop of Canterbury in the 16th century, was noted for his inquisitiveness about the conduct of his clergy. He was called the Nosy Parker. Now Nosy Parker means a very inquisitive person, a busybody. A person who is snoopy is nosy in a sly or sneaking way. Detectives are not just nosy, they are snoopy. 'Snoop' means 'to look about in a sneaking way.' It is also used as a noun. It means 'a person who snoops, a detective.'

I detest her as she is snoopy.

'Snoopy' and 'nosy' are informal words of contempt. 'Snoops' or 'snoopers' are the kind of people who would apply even a stethoscope to the wall to find out what is going on on the other side! 'Snoop' is from a Dutch word which means 'to take and eat food on the sly.' A snooperscope is 'a device that transmits infrared radiations and receives those reflected back from solid objects, producing an image on a fluorescent screen, enabling the user to see effectively objects obscured by darkness.'"

"Fiddle, violin (Hemalatha, Bombay)"

"Both mean the same. 'Fiddle' is an informal word. 'Fiddle' also means 'a thing done dishonestly, swindle, fraud.'

The whole thing was a fiddle.

'To play second fiddle' means 'to take a subordinate position.'

He loves to play second fiddle to his boss.

When you are in very good health, you say that you are fit as a fiddle. A properly tuned fiddle looks and sounds impressive. When you say that someone is fit as a fiddle, you mean that he is impressive as a properly tuned fiddle. 'To fiddle' means 'to play on a fiddle.' It is rarely used in this sense as 'fiddle' has some unpleasant connotations. So you say he plays the violin. 'A violinist will still speak of his instrument as a fiddle, but not of his playing as fiddling or of himself as a fiddler' (A Dictionary of Modern English Usage by H. W. Fowler, revised by Sir Earnest Cowers).

'To fiddle' means 'to falsify accounts, especially to gain monetary advantage.'

He fiddled his TA and was caught.

A fiddler is a swindler.

He fiddled a ticket to a conference.

'Fiddle about or around' means 'to waste time, play aimlessly.'

Why don't you stop fiddling around?
He fiddled with the TV for hours.
He fiddled away valuable time.

'Fiddlesticks' means 'nonsense.' It is used as an interjection.

Fiddlesticks! I don't believe it.

A fiddlestick is a violin bow. It is considered as something of small value. From this we get the meaning of 'fiddlesticks.' 'Fiddle-faddle' also means 'nonsense' and it too is used as an interjection. 'Fiddling' also means 'trivial, unimportant, petty.'

Don't bother me with fiddling details.
It is a fiddling sum of money.
Published in The Hindu on July 16, 1991.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

With general elections announced to the 18th Lok Sabha, here's a quiz on Parliamentary elections in India

Srinivasan Ramani

QUESTION 1

What was special about P.L. Handoo (of the Jammu & Kashmir National Conference)'s victory in the 1989 general elections in Anantnag constituency?

QUESTION 2

Conversely, what was special about the Congress' K. Ramakrishna's victory in the 1989 elections from Anakapalle constituency in undivided Andhra Pradesh?

QUESTION 3

As of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, which was the constituency which had the highest number of electors? And this belonged to which State?

QUESTION 4

Which was the constituency with the lowest number of electors?

QUESTION 5

Who holds the record for the highest victory margin in absolute number terms — 6,96,321 votes — in Indian elections? Name the record holder's party as well.

Visual question:

Identify this gentleman and the distinction he holds in India's electoral history.

WIKIPEDIA COMMONS

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz:

1. The year in which the title of Sangita Kalanidhi was established. **Ans: 1943. The award was the brainchild of the then Music Academy president K.V. Krishnaswamy Aiyer**
2. The youngest female awardee to get the Sangita Kalanidhi. **Ans: M.L. Vasanta Kumari**
3. The reason why the award was not bestowed in 1975. **Ans: To mark the bicentenary of Muttuswami Dikshitar's birth**
4. Name the 'Bombay Sisters'. **Ans: C. Saroja and C. Lalitha**
5. The first dance artiste to be honoured with the Sangita Kalanidhi. **Ans: Balasaraswathi**
6. Musicologist Ananthakrishna Sarma was honoured primarily for this work. A**ns: Deciphering Annamacharya sahityas from copper plates in Tirumala**
7. Name the Carnatic legend who refused to accept the honour when he was first approached by the Academy. **Ans: G.N. Balasubramaniam**

Visual: Name the two Sangita Kalanidhi awardees. **Ans: Valayapatti A.R. Subramaniam and Lalgudi Jayaraman**

Early Birds: Nobody got all the correct answers

Word of the day

Prink:
dress very carefully and in a finicky manner; put on special clothes to appear particularly appealing and attractive

Synonyms: dress up, overdress, decked out, attire

Usage: *He prinked himself in preparation for the dance.*

Pronunciation: bit.ly/prinkprotc

International Phonetic Alphabet: prɪŋk

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

Holi in Bengaluru takes a sustainable turn

A priest throws 'Gulal' on devotees as they celebrate Holi at a temple in Bengaluru. (Right and below) Women celebrating the festival in different parts of the city. AFP, PTI

This year, owing to shortage of water, many people in Bengaluru decided to keep the celebration dry and as minimal as possible

Yemen S.
BENGALURU

Holi, the festival of colours, is a celebration of love and spring. *Pichkaris* (water guns), water filled balloons, pool parties, rain dance, special foods, *Thandai* and a lot more are associated with the festival, though this year there is a restriction on using excessive water in celebrations amidst a huge water crisis in Bengaluru.

Holi, a prominent festival in the northern states of the country, has become part of the popular culture among youngsters in Bengaluru, with the increasing influx of workers from there to Karnataka. The festival, decades ago, was celebrated only in the Marwadi pockets of the city, which eventually became one of the most happening events of the year with many migrants from various states spread across the city celebrating it.

However, this year, it was dry and large a "dry Holi" following the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) putting out guidelines for celebrations in the city. The civic body urged commercial and recreational centres not to use Cauvery or borewell water for pool parties or rain dances to celebrate the festival of colour. Despite the BWSSB's urge to save water, there have been allegations of some commercial establishments organising pool parties and rain dances around the city.

No grand celebration

But those celebrating at home have decided to keep this year's Holi as dry and minimal as possible. Speaking to *The Hindu*, Sumitra Solanki, a resident of V.V. Puram, said, "Holi is one of our biggest and most enjoyed festivals. We celebrate Holi from early morning till late at night every year. But this year we have decided to keep it short due to the water shortage in the city. We celebrated the festival only for a couple of hours in the afternoon within our close circles. Of course, there were limited water balloons and *pichkaris* for the children, but we tried to keep the celebrations as dry as possible."

Water-free Holi

Abhinandan R., a resident of a gated community in Ramagondanahalli near Yelahanka, said their association decided to have a water-free Holi this year, "Every year we have a grand celebration. This year too it was a big celebration, but it was completely water-free, as we do not want to contribute to the existing water crisis in the city. We requested all the residents to get organic colours and say no to artificial colours, as it is easy to wash off and does not require too much water in the shower."

Cashfree Payments launches 'RiskShield' to empower merchants

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Cashfree Payments an API banking company, announced the launch of 'RiskShield', India's first real-time risk management solution for payment gateways. It aims at reducing fraudulent activities by up to 40%. Built in-house, this solution will also help Indian businesses reduce chargebacks and disputes, thereby empowering them with tools strategically designed to combat fraudulent transactions with precision and securing financial stability.

The surge in fraudulent activities due to digital transactions poses a significant threat to security, causing critical issues for businesses such as direct revenue loss, bank account debit freeze, working capital blockages, operational complexities, legal expenses, and the looming threat of account termination due to high chargebacks.

According to the release, Cashfree Payments' RiskShield provides a secure business environment by mitigating fraud, minimizing litigation risks, improving transaction experiences, and fostering positive customer relationships. Additionally, merchants using Cashfree Payments' orchestration platform FlowWise can seamlessly integrate RiskShield to block fraud transactions on multiple Payment aggregators.

RiskShield uses advanced artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms across their merchant network to identify fraudulent transaction patterns and safeguard the merchants from huge potential losses and litigation risks.

Akash Sinha, CEO and Co-founder, Cashfree Payments said, "We built 'RiskShield' to empower merchants to fortify their defense against fraudulent transactions."

"This product is a result of years of Cashfree Payments' research and analysis of high-risk transactions into a set of tools that merchants can now use as a complete risk management solution through which they can curb cybercrime. We believe RiskShield will redefine the security landscape of online transactions in India, offering merchants unparalleled protection and peace of mind."

World Head Injury Day observed at St. John's

The event with the theme "Restoring Lives, One Patient at a Time" included poster competitions, skits, and mime acts that depicted the importance of adhering to these government-led initiatives

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

To mark World Head Injury Day, a team of doctors, nurses and nurse practitioners at St. John's Medical College Hospital's Surgical and Neuro Intensive Care Unit came together on recently to shed light on the grave consequences of neglecting road safety.

The event with the theme "Restoring Lives, One Patient at a Time" included poster competitions, skits, and mime acts that depicted the importance of adhering to government-led initiatives aimed at preventing head injuries.

Art and drama

According to a press release, the event utilised art and drama to penetrate the public psyche, making the complex medical subject of head injury not only accessible but also relatable. Live demonstrations illustrated the journey of head injury patients, from the moment of trauma to the intricate process of recovery within hospital walls, thereby emphasizing the crucial role of immediate and skilled medical intervention.

The event utilised art and drama to penetrate the public psyche, making the complex medical subject of head injury not only accessible but also relatable. GETTY IMAGES

Experts in head injury management - David K. Menon, Director of Research at the University of Cambridge, United Kingdom and Uma Maheshwar Rao, a retired senior professor from NIMHANS, spoke on tailoring therapy to individual needs in traumatic brain injury (TBI) cases. The highlight was the call to action for everyone to take a pledge for road safety.

While Professor Menon spoke about 'Multi Modal Monitoring' in TBI, Dr. Rao shared anecdotes from his 40-year clinical experience as a neurocritical care consultant at NIMHANS. He quoted several interesting cases he had come across and shared the lessons learned.

Dr. Rao shared anecdotes from his 40-year clinical experience as a neurocritical care consultant

TBI in an Indian context

Both clinicians also spoke on how to manage TBI in an Indian context to an audience consisting of intensive care physicians, emergency physicians and researchers from across the country. They offered advice on managing TBI cases in both tertiary care hospitals and resource limited settings. They also emphasised the need to provide holistic care to neuro-critical care patients not just from the clinical aspect but also from the social and psychological perspective.

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 26, 1974

CM Asks Politicians Not to Interfere With Police

Bangalore, March 25. There should not be any interference in the day-to-day administration of the police force for it to function "efficiently and effectively", the Chief Minister Mr. Devaraj Urs said here to-day. The Chief Minister was declaring to open the new barracks of the Karnataka State Reserve Police (first Battalion). He deplored the tendency of leaders, politicians, and the public to interfere with the working of the police in the State. Mr. Urs said that under the Constitution, even the Chief Minister of a State having charge of the Home portfolio had no powers to instruct or direct the police to function in a manner suited to him or his govt.

Retirement Age: Court Rejects Teachers' Plea

Bangalore, March 25: Mr. Justice E.S. Venkataramaiah in the Karnataka High Court to-day dismissed a batch of writ petitions challenging the Government's order reducing the age of superannuation from 58 years to 55.

The services of the petitioners, teachers working in schools run by the Government stood allotted to the State of Karnataka under the provisions of the States re-organisation Act. In the States in which they were working before the re-organisation, the age of superannuation was 58 years. Similarly, teachers who were working in the schools belonging to certain local school boards and municipalities who became government servants on the said schools being taken over by the government also were liable to be retired at the age of 58.

Connecting idle books and hungry minds

What began as a gesture to donate books led to the Food4Thought Foundation helping establish libraries across India. The target? A 1000 libraries by 2025

Sangeetha Devi Dundoo

A book a day The team of Food4Thought Foundation and of their some activities. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"We help connect idle books to hungry minds," reads a statement on the website of Food4Thought Foundation. Formed in 2015 as a bridge connecting individuals who want to donate books idling on their shelves and educational institutions and those seeking books to open a small library, the organisation has helped set up 622 libraries across India.

Their goal is to establish 1001 libraries by 2025. "Initially, we were contacting people and telling them about the need for libraries. Today, we get nearly 20 inquiries daily," says Madhavi, one of the co-founders and director.

The libraries they have helped set up are at government schools, hospitals, parks, gated communities, and even prisons. WhileBengaluru and Hyderabad have been proactive, there has been increased interest from Northeastern States and Gujarat, says Madhavi.

So far, the Foundation has helped set up 250 libraries in Bengaluru, 135 in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh and 55 in the Northeast.

The Foundation's multi-pronged activities include setting up and monitoring libraries, guiding teachers and volunteers for the upkeep of the library, cataloguing and barcoding the books to help donors track their books, encouraging reading habits through events such as reading Olympiads, storytelling sessions and quiz programmes, and building a digital catalogue of folk stories through podcasts.

Where does your book go?

When approached by individuals who want to donate their books, the Foundation asks for the titles. "If they are children's storybooks, we accept them immediately since several government schools need them. If the books are more fiction or non-fiction for adults, we identify appropriate libraries. We also talk to individuals keen on opening small libraries and then accept the books," Madhavi explains.

The Foundation does not accept textbooks or religious books.

Several requests come from schools in far-flung areas and the Foundation maps the students' reading profile – level of ease with reading and languages – and then collates and ships 250 books.

Madhavi explains, "We segregate books into levels one, two, three and four based on the reading difficulty."

Small libraries have also been set up in outpatient departments of a few hospitals in Hyderabad, at the request of doctors. Libraries have also been set up at panchayat levels in villages, cafes in urban areas and a few prisons. "If we know that someone will maintain the library, we help them set it up," says Madhavi.

Are the books being used?

Setting up a library is only the initial step. For schools, a teacher is trained to maintain the library, encouraged to conduct two library classes per month and is incentivised for the effort. On a dedicated app, the teacher logs in details of the library classes with audio and video recordings.

Establishing a library, monitoring it, courier charges for the books and periodic competitions to motivate children with gifts for the winners costs money and that, says the Food4Thought Foundation, prompted them to look for corporates and individuals to adopt libraries.

While corporates are still warming up to this activity in Hyderabad, there's been a good response in Bengaluru, says Madhavi. "An initial investment of ₹25000 and an annual sum of ₹11000 is charged to keep these school libraries running."

For the libraries established thus far in educational institutions of Bengaluru, Madhavi states that most school prefer books in Kannada and English. A few schools request books in Urdu and Hindi as well. Of the libraries established in Bengaluru so far, 150 have been adopted by a corporate organisation. "We have a waiting list of 100 libraries to be opened. If more corporates come forward, it will be of help," she adds.

Incentive to read

Besides establishing and maintaining libraries, the Foundation has also been helping conduct reading activities. The Reading Olympiad, for example, is a contest that tests the reading skills of students from schools in different regions. A new initiative called Reading Decathlon works as a quiz. "We invited six institutions, including international schools and schools with CBSE syllabus from different States, to Hyderabad. The students were given a list of books to read in advance, based on which a quiz and online were conducted," adds Madhavi.

Another initiative by the Foundation attempts to bring book clubs in the country under an umbrella to help members participate in activities conducted by clubs in other cities through online participation. Book clubs in cities such as Sikkim and Dehradun have several members but very few authors travel to these locations for interactive sessions.

Authors frequent book clubs in a few urban areas, but the clubs have not noticed an increase in membership. Connecting the clubs virtually and sharing their calendars, she says, helps members participate in more activities. So far 25 book clubs are under this umbrella.

Recording indigenous stories

Besides libraries and reading initiatives, the Foundation has been recording lesser-known indigenous stories, both oral and written folklore, as podcasts. In the first phase 501 stories in eight languages were recorded and are now available on their YouTube channel (Food4Thought Foundation). Most of these audio stories are of two to three-minute duration.

Plans are on to record another 500 in 11 languages by December 2024. The Foundation hopes that all these initiatives help spark a reading revolution.

When sheen meets sparkle

Shimmer and sashay IRO brings the best of two worlds together. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Nidhi Adlakha

Just in time for summer, luxurious silks in vivid hues of electric purple, ultramarine blue, and rani pink are part of Ekaya Banaras' latest capsule collection, IRO. Comprising 18 saris in silks and organza, the New Delhi-based brand has launched them in collaboration with jewellery designer Anu Merton.

Palak Shah, CEO, Ekaya Banaras, says the collection has been in the works for a few months. "We opted for strong solid colours and kept it minimal to give women a blank canvas, so that they can lend their personal flavour to it, layer it with gorgeous jewellery and play around with it," she says, adding that she noticed some women fear wearing saris because of their "heaviness and how it will drape, so this was our attempt to create that one versatile piece that you can dress up or down and get into a new look everytime you style it differently".

"It's like that favourite black or white tee that you keep going back to over and over again," says Palak. "Saris are all about expressing your moods. There's a pop hue for every mood, bringing a contemporary twist to the weave and also appealing to our modern senses," she says, adding that her top picks from the collection comprise Ultramarine Blue Silk, Citrine Yellow Silk, Rani Pink Satin and Burgundy Rouge Silk.

"They come in a varied range of fabrics, from silks to organzas, and satins. They're light, breezy and drape beautifully," says Palak.

Elaborating on the collaboration with Anu, Palak reminisces how they both went to the same school, although years apart. "We've known each other for a couple of years and always spoke about doing something together. I've always admired Anu for her fierce personality, and the way she wore her saris beautifully!"

"When I met her at the Vogue Forces of Fashion, she stood out wearing a simple white organza sari we ignited on how we wanted to take Make-in-India global," shares Palak.

Anu, who has worked on a collaboration of this nature for the first time, says she has always treated clothes as a canvas and jewellery as playthings. "The richness of the colours, the lusciousness of fabrics like satin silk and organza – which I personally love, also for how beautifully they drape – really set the stage for the jewellery that includes bangles, rings, necklaces, and anklets. I've played with a lot of necklaces, rings and bangles this time, and we've tried to use contrasting colours in the jewellery too," she says, adding that she is usually quite partial to white.

"My father loves to point out that when I'm old and frail I'll realise I should've worn more colour, and we'll always have a little laugh about it – but I do love colours! And you'll see why. I was blown away by the range of shades Palak showed me; each one inspired a whole new path for possibilities. We really had fun picking them, making sure there's one for a different mood, and of course, to pair with the range of jewellery for a variety of occasions," she concludes.

Saris priced upwards of ₹14,975, and jewellery ₹2,000 onwards are available across all Ekaya stores at Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and online at ekaya.in

About art and inclusivity

Max Mueller Bhavan presents its sixth edition of PECDA (Prakriti Excellence in Contemporary Dance Awards) in Bengaluru on March 30. PECDA is a biennial pan-Indian open-entry competition of works in progress for contemporary choreographers and dancers, blueprinted in 2012 by dance enabler Karthika Nair (poet, producer and co-founder of Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui's company Eastman).

Glyn Roberts (Team Manager Creative Communities at Townsville City, Australia), Faith Tan (Director of Programming, The Esplanade, Singapore), Saïdo Lehlouh (Co-director, Centre Chorégraphique National de Rennes et de Bretagne, France) and Shiva Pathak (Co-Founder & Artistic Director, Sandbox Collective, Bengaluru) and Melanie Zimmermann (Artistic Director of Hanover's international dance festival REAL DANCE) are the jury members.

German dance dramaturge, Melanie, is also collaborating with Max Mueller Bhavan for a workshop in Bengaluru on *Radical Openness - A Workshop on Practices and Strategies of Inclusivity for Art Productions*.

Melanie has worked in the medium of film and television before studying cultural studies and dance in Frankfurt an der Oder and in Paris. She has also worked for the Forsythe Company and has studied dramaturgy with Hans-Thies Lehmann in Frankfurt am Main and Brussels.

German dance dramaturge Melanie, is also collaborating with Max Mueller Bhavan for a workshop in Bengaluru on strategies of inclusivity

In 2010, she was a dance-WEB scholarship holder, and later, went on to work with Wanda Golonka, Peeping Tom, and Laurent Chétouane as a freelance dancer and actor. In the past few years she has been actively involved in supporting artistes with disabilities and representatives of "black dance culture".

The workshop on March 27 at 6.30pm, will be at Bangalore International Centre. There is no registration fee, but as the space is open to a limited number, you need to book your place on https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1O7bXx8LkUS_exrZw7ib-Jy7mxNk7MF6Tc-38VOeWkC5s/edit or connect with Max Mueller Bhavan

Delving deep Melanie Zimmermann. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

CITYBEATS

Sporting menu

ONGOING

Enjoy watching IPL 2024 live with Hops Haus' exclusive cricket season menu by chef Vikas Seth. You can dig into king prawns, ghee roast chicken, Shanghai lamb parcel, boccaccini cherry tomato crostini and more, while cheering for your favourites.

At Hops Haus outlets in White Field and Embassy One. Call 8861924449 or 9606954447

For bravehearts

MARCH 27

This event called 'Abhaya - Women Mystics Who Dared,' is a programme that is a part of IME's series celebrating Women's History Month. The event will feature a song and story presentation by Chitra Srikrishna. She will be accompanied by Deepika Srinivasan on the mridanga.

At Indian Music Experience Museum (IME) JP Nagar, 6pm. Call 96866 02366

In a soup

MONDAY TO FRIDAY

Cantan, Chinese Bar House has introduced a 'Soup & Dimsum Menu'. These offerings will be available for lunch and is priced at ₹849 plus tax for the vegetarian platter and ₹949 for the non-vegetarian platter. Their signature dish includes the har gao prawns with bamboo shoots.

Cantan is on Lavelle Road. Dial 48669269 or 919019296386 for details.

Confusion reigns as NDA yet to name candidates for crucial seats

Sumit Bhattacharjee
VISAKHAPATNAM

The NDA partners — TDP, BJP, and JSP— are still working out the finer details, as there is widespread resentment over the prospective candidates in the three constituencies. FILE PHOTO

Though the National Democratic Alliance partners (TDP-JSP-BJP alliance) have declared their candidates for the Visakhapatnam Lok Sabha segment, they have yet to announce their candidates for the three main Assembly constituencies of Bheemunipatnam, Visakhapatnam North, and Visakhapatnam South under the segment.

Even though the YSRCP has already announced its candidates, the NDA has yet to make the final calls, causing considerable confusion among voters and prospective candidates waiting in the wings for days. All three Assembly constituencies are key, and it is learnt that the NDA is still working out the finer details, as there is large-scale resentment over the prospective candidates.

Bheemunipatnam
While YSRCP has given its Bheemunipatnam ticket to sitting MLA Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao, the NDA is still figuring out who their candidate should be to take on Mr. Srinivasa Rao.

Initially, senior TDP leader Ganta Srinivasa Rao was hoping to contest from Bheemunipatnam, but later, it was learnt that TDP's national president N. Chandrababu Naidu had asked him to contest from Cheepurupalli in Vizianagaram district.

Visakhapatnam South
Even JSP's candidate, Vamsi Krishna Yadav, who was the initial prospect, has been kept on hold.

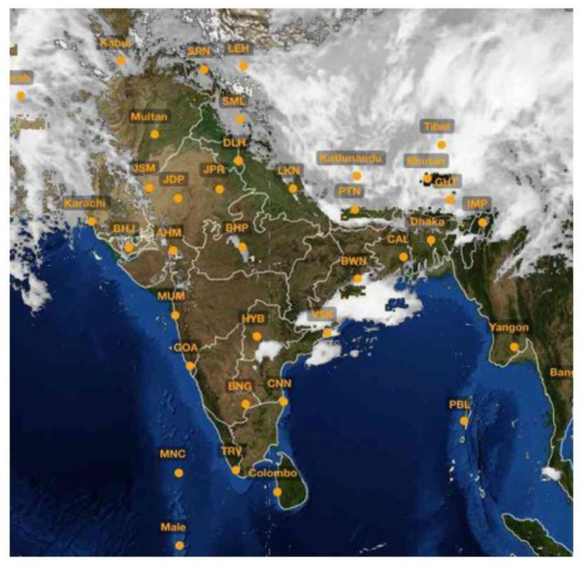
Later, Mr. Vamsi was reportedly told to contest from Visakhapatnam South, which has generated quite a heat within the alliance. Mr. Vamsi is facing stiff resistance not only from the TDP hopeful Gandi Babji but also from his own party cadres and local leaders. They have come out openly against Mr. Vamsi, and a few local corporators have openly announced that they would not support him, as he was a non-local to the segment.

Visakhapatnam North
The delay in announcing the Visakhapatnam North candidate is most baffling. BJP's Vishnu Kumar Raju, who won in 2014, has been the choice since the beginning.

He has already taken up his campaign strongly but is yet to be named. Whoever's name is suggested will be pitched against YSRCP's K.K. Raju.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Tuesday: Heavy rainfall/snowfall likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya. Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning/gusty winds likely at isolated places over Gangetic West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Sikkim and Sub-Himalayan West Bengal

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	33.4	21.3	Kozhikode	—	36.6	27.4
Ahmedabad	—	38.6	23.7	Kurnool	—	39.5	25.8
Aizawl	0.4	30.9	16.1	Lucknow	—	34.5	19.6
Allahabad	—	38.5	20.2	Madurai	—	37.7	23.1
Bengaluru	—	35.2	21.0	Mangaluru	—	34.3	25.2
Bhopal	—	37.4	20.6	Mumbai	—	33.6	23.5
Bhubaneswar	—	36.4	24.1	Mysuru	—	35.6	17.8
Chandigarh	—	32.2	16.5	New Delhi	0.1	33.2	15.8
Chennai	—	33.1	25.6	Patna	—	30.9	21.0
Coimbatore	—	36.6	22.7	Port Blair	—	32.5	25.4
Dehradun	—	31.4	13.5	Puducherry	—	33.4	24.2
Gangtok	0.6	12.5	11.9	Pune	—	38.6	21.7
Goa	—	33.0	24.4	Raipur	—	37.8	25.2
Guwahati	—	31.4	18.2	Ranchi	—	33.0	18.0
Hubballi	—	38.0	24.0	Shillong	—	21.4	10.9
Hyderabad	—	37.0	24.6	Shimla	0.6	19.6	9.6
Imphal	—	29.5	13.6	Srinagar	—	23.0	7.0
Jaipur	—	35.7	21.2	Thiruvananthapuram	—	33.2	25.6
Kochi	—	33.0	27.4	Tiruchi	—	36.7	24.0
Kohima	—	14.4	8.8	Vijayawada	—	37.3	24.0
Kolkata	—	35.6	25.4	Visakhapatnam	—	32.8	25.8

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.15	185	.47	114	102	
Bengaluru	.10	.17	.24	101	131	
Chennai	4	9	.71	66	65	
Delhi	.21	.88	.62	248	216	
Hyderabad	2	.33	.39	66	132	
Kolkata	7	.46	.24	54	57	
Lucknow	.11	.23	.81	234	140	
Mumbai	.84	.45	103	96	97	
Pune	.99	126	116	84	90	
Visakhapatnam	.14	.42	.31	67	103	

Yesterday
In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Rajgir, Bihar recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 322 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Puducherry recorded a healthy AQI score of 32

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

3 pilgrims die during trek on Vellingiri Hills

The Hindu Bureau
COIMBATORE

Three pilgrims died while trekking on the Vellingiri Hills near Coimbatore, on Sunday and Monday.

With these deaths, the total number of pilgrims who have died while trekking these hills during the ongoing pilgrimage season (which began in February), has risen to five. Two young pilgrims had previously died, one in February, and another earlier this month. The summit is situated at a height of 1,850 metres (MSL) where Lord Shiva in *Swayambhu* (self-manifested form) is worshipped.

Forest Department officials said that the first death on Sunday was reported around 1 p.m. The deceased has been identified as C.H. Subba Rao, 68, a native of Hyderabad. He developed breathlessness on the fourth hill and died.

The Alandurai police were intimated about the death and volunteers brought the body downhill. The police, then, sent the body to the Coimbatore Medical College Hospital (CMCH) for a post-mortem.

A second pilgrim, M. Thiyagarajan, 35, of Jalakandapuram in Salem district, died on the first hill, at Kurangupaalam, around 4 p.m. on Sunday. The police took his body to CMCH too after the volunteers brought it downhill.

A third pilgrim died on the second hill in the early hours of Monday.

Following the deaths, the Forest Department has issued advisories for people who plan to trek the hills, noted to be one of the most difficult trekking routes in Tamil Nadu.

Cong. takes serious view of open criticism by its leaders

Senior party leaders coming down heavily on Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and also commenting on the selection of candidates for Lok Sabha election draw the ire of the leadership

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy with Congress senior leader V. Hanumantha Rao. FILE PHOTO

Congress party has taken a serious view of certain party leaders openly criticising its leaders and their decision in the run up to the Lok Sabha election.

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) working president and MLC B. Mahesh Kumar Goud has issued a stern warning to the leaders asking them to refrain from open criticism of the party decisions.

His statement came in wake of senior leaders like V. Hanumantha Rao, G. Niranjan and Bakka Judson coming down heavily on Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and also the selection of candidates for the Lok Sabha election.

Mr. Rao was irked that the Chief Minister did not give him time since he assumed office while Mr. Niranjan was upset that four outsiders had been given tickets when there were several deserving leaders for the LS poll. Mr. Judson went a step further criticising the surveys conducted by strategist Sunil Konugolu.

Mr. Goud said if these leaders have any issues, there were appropriate forum to air their views. The All India Congress Committee has finalised the candidates after wide ranging consultations with the Chief Minister and other senior leaders and it is not a unilateral decision of any individual, he said adding that any further criticism of the ticket allocation and leadership would be viewed very seriously.

The party has so far named nine candidates for the Lok Sabha election.

More youth could fall into Russian job racket, says Cong. leader

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Leader of the Opposition in the Kerala Assembly, V.D. Satheesan, on Monday voiced his concern over the recruitment of youth from Kerala for potentially dangerous jobs in the Russia-Ukraine war zone.

In an open letter, the Congress leader drew the attention of Union Minister for External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar to the dubious role played by some local travel agencies in the international racket. Mr. Satheesan said he had spoken to the families of at least three youth trapped in the war zone.

A travel agency had lured them to Russia for jobs that paid at least ₹2.5 lakh as monthly salary. On reaching the country, their handlers confiscated the passports and mobile phones of the youth and pushed them to the battlefront.

Mr. Satheesan said the episode was just the tip of the iceberg. "A larger racket with international connections seemed to be at play and more impressionable youth could fall prey to it," he said.

In March, the CBI searched 10 locations to crack down on the suspected racket. Its search targets included a travel agency in Thiruvananthapuram.

On March 22, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan informed Mr. Jaishankar that three youth from Thiruvananthapuram district were trapped in a strife-torn locality in Russia. Mr. Vijayan sought the urgent intervention of Mr. Jaishankar to repatriate them.

Spreading smiles

On duty: A girl selling balloons at the Sri Lakshmi Tirupatamma Temple Chinna Tirunalla Utsavalu at Penuganchiprolu in NTR district of Andhra Pradesh on Sunday. The temple is one of the major pilgrimage centres of the State. G.N. RAO

Musth period over, Kerala's wild elephant 'Padayappa' returns to its normal behaviour

The Hindu Bureau
IDUKKI

A wild tusker, locally called 'Padayappa', has returned to its normal behaviour with its *musth* period having ended, Kerala Forest department officials have confirmed.

For the past two months, Padayappa had been in the headlines for running down vehicles and wreaking havoc on shops.

According to officials, the animal which frequents human inhabited areas in Munnar has not caused any damage for the last six days.

On Monday, the tusker entered the highway near the toll plaza at Devikulam on the Munnar-Bodimettu highway around 7 a.m. "The tusker which was camping on the road, approached an interstate KSRTC bus around 7.30 a.m., which was going from Munnar to Theni in Tamil Nadu. The animal was in search of food and did not charge at others vehicles or passengers. When they noticed the presence of the tusker on the road, the bus driver brought the vehicle to a halt," said a Forest department official.

Special visitor: Wild tusker 'Padayappa', blocking a KSRTC bus near a toll plaza at Devikulam on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Devikulam range officer P.V. Vegi said that the tusker was rummaging through the KSRCT bus and did not cause any damage or harm. "The special team formed to monitor Padayappa and the Rapid Response Team (RRT) from Devikulam have also been camping in the area to monitor the animal's movements. Later, it moved to a nearby forest," said Mr. Vegi.

Retired forest veterinary officer Sunil Kumar explained that the tusker's behaviour in the past few days indicates that the *musth* period has been completed.

Five issues likely to cast impact on YSRCP, NDA partners in A.P.

NEWS ANALYSIS

V. Raghavendra
VIJAYAWADA

As the general election nears, the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) and the alliance of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP)-BJP-Jana Sena Party are busy luring the voters with a flurry of welfare schemes while focusing on what they have purportedly done for Andhra Pradesh since its bifurcation 10 years ago.

But, five significant issues are bound to cast a major impact on their chances of victory, across party lines, which is why the two sides are already trading barbs over them.

The issues at stake are the demand for Special Category Status (SCS), the proposal to shift the capital out of Amaravati in the name of decentralisation, former MP Y.S. Vivekananda Reddy's murder, the attack on Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy with a 'kodi-kathi' (a knife used in cockfights) at Visakhapatnam airport by J. Srinivas in October 2018 and the slew of scams allegedly masterminded by former Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu.

To start with, the SCS has been a political hot potato right from the day it was promised on the floor of the Rajya Sabha in February 2014 by the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and M. Venkaiah Naidu had insisted that it should be given for 10 years instead of just five.

The National Democratic Alliance government expressed its inability to concede the demand by citing the lack of a recommendation to that effect by the 14th Finance Commission.

There are multiple cases against former A.P. CM Chandrababu Naidu pending final adjudication in courts.

What the State ultimately got was Special Financial Assistance in lieu of the SCS. The YSRCP laid the blame for it at the TDP's door and the TDP accused YSRCP of failing to mount pressure on the Modi government to honour the commitment in spite of having 22 MPs. The SCS had since been a bone of contention between the arch-rivals. Ironically, it is not a part of the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014.

The proposed shift of the capital from Amaravati to Visakhapatnam is another issue that infused tension among the YSRCP and the TDP. The BJP's stand has been consistent but 'dichotomous' in the sense that it vehemently opposed moving the capital to the port city but has no objection to shifting the High Court from its current location at Nelapadu in Amaravati to Kurnool.

Then comes former MP Vivekananda Reddy's murder that took place a few months before the 2019 election. The then Leader of the Opposition Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy was quick to demand a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe but went on to withdraw his petition in the High Court soon after becoming the Chief Minister.

Interestingly, AP Congress Committee president Y.S. Sharmila recently gave the episode a curious twist by openly saying that her brother Mr. Jagan Reddy's inaction amounted to protecting the conspirators.

Vivekananda Reddy's daughter Suneetha Narreddy launched an equally blistering attack on Mr. Jagan but stopped short of accusing him of being involved in the ghastly murder. Going a step further, she made a fervent appeal to the people not to vote for her 'brother's party' as they could not afford to let 'murderers rule the State'. This case is now being heard by the Telangana High Court.

Then there is the attack on Mr. Jagan by Srinivas in October 2018. The Opposition parties called it a drama enacted by Mr. Jagan for sympathy in the run-up to the 2019 election while he suspected a larger conspiracy behind it. The NIA Court ruled out such a plot and categorically stated that Srinivas had no association with any political party. Srinivas was enlarged by the High Court on bail in February this year nearly 62 months after his arrest.

Last but not the least is the skill development scam case in which Mr. Naidu spent an unprecedented 53 days in the Rajahmundry central jail. The legal battle over it is under way in the Supreme Court.

There are multiple other cases against Mr. Naidu pending final adjudication in courts.

The TDP called it political vendetta even as the government claimed to have concrete evidence of his misdeeds and asserted that truth would prevail.

Sordid scheme

Matching electoral bond purchasers and donors reveals cronyism, corruption

Following the Supreme Court of India-ordered release of the final tranche of data from the State Bank of India, it has now been possible to get a nearly complete picture of electoral financing, which was once an opaque route. The SBI had to release data of the unique numbers for electoral bonds purchased by corporate and individual donors and later encashed by political parties. That the SBI had to be prodded twice by the Court to release these chunks of data – in the first instance they were without the unique numbers that could connect donors with parties – is an indictment of the bank which had initially sought an extension till June 30, 2024, well after the general election, to release the information. On the other hand, it took only a few hours for news organisations to perform a simple data-matching exercise to connect the two sets of information – on the companies that had purchased the bonds and on the parties that had encashed them. A cursory look at the data reveals the inefficacy of the argument for the need for opacity of electoral bonds that had been propounded by the Union government, but one soundly rejected by the Court. For one, there seems to be a clear correlation between large donations being made to certain political parties and bond purchasers receiving high-value infrastructure contracts. In some cases, there is strong correlation between entities being subject to actions or facing probes by the Enforcement Directorate and the Income-Tax Department, and later these entities or their representatives purchasing bonds. This is especially so for many donors who purchased these bonds that were later encashed by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

That the top 19 firms – based on the cumulative size of donations made – went on to invariably fund the BJP, besides other parties, from mid-2019 to February 2024 (22 firms donated ₹100 crore or more in this period) also suggests that the bonds were a device used to curry favour with the establishment. The presence of a unique identifier for these bonds in the hands of the SBI, which could allow it to keep an audit trail of transactions, and that the Finance Ministry had allowed certain bonds to be encashed even after their expiry date (within 15 days of the purchase date) showed that the scheme had also created undue advantage for the ruling party. It is clear that the bonds had skewed campaign and party financing heavily in the favour of the ruling party, besides putting a veil over the unscrupulous motivations for the donations. It is now incumbent upon civil society to enlighten the electorate about the scheme and to raise questions about the skewed nature of donations. This will just be the first step to cleansing the system.

Terror in Moscow

The Islamic State poses security challenges for the Eurasian region

The terror attack at the Crocus City Hall on the outskirts of Moscow on March 22, that killed at least 137 people, underscores the concerns that the Islamic State (IS), whose physical caliphate in Syria and Iraq was destroyed six years ago, is on a path to revival. In January, the Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K), the Afghanistan-based arm of the Sunni jihadist group, had carried out twin bombings in Kerman, Iran, targeting a memorial event of General Qassem Soleimani, the Quds Force commander assassinated by the U.S. in January 2020. These bombings killed at least 80 people. Since then, the IS has targeted Turkey, Syria and Afghanistan, and the Moscow shooting points to its growing terror capabilities. The Russian authorities have charged four Tajik nationals. The IS-K, which was established in Afghanistan's Nangarhar province in 2015, is largely made up of Central Asian militants. This branch rose to prominence after the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan in August 2021. Since then, the IS-K has attacked Afghanistan's Shia minority, and sought to build a network of cells with radicalised youths from Central Asia and Afghanistan's Tajik and Uzbek minorities, who were angry with the Taliban's Pashtun regime. These networks are now gaining strength.

In recent months, the IS-K has run propaganda videos against Russia and President Vladimir Putin. The IS claims that the Russians spilled "the blood of Muslims" in Afghanistan, Chechnya and Syria. In Syria, Russia's intervention in 2015 turned the civil war around in favour of the regime of President Bashar al-Assad, who the IS wanted to topple. If in 2013-14, al Qaeda in Iraq and the IS used anti-western propaganda to build networks across West Asia, today, the IS-K is using anti-Russian and anti-Iranian propaganda to find recruits among Central Asians, Afghans and Pakistanis. The group, which once controlled territories across Syria and Iraq, has now transformed itself into a traditional terrorist outfit that hides in chaos and strikes on the public. The back-to-back attacks pose a serious security challenge to the Eurasian region, especially for Russia, which hosts thousands of Central Asian migrant labourers. Mr. Putin, who rose to power in the late 1990s promising security to Russians battered by terror attacks, will have to plug the security loopholes. But that will not be enough. To tackle the IS, countries need to address the geopolitical conditions that help the IS regroup. As long as the Taliban continues its Pashtun-only rule over a diverse, radicalised Afghanistan, and instability, wars and lawlessness prevail in parts of West Asia, groups such as the IS would continue to find avenues to grow and strike.

A dissonant chord in the world of Carnatic music

Captain G.R. Gopinath

is a soldier, farmer and founder of Air Deccan

T.M. Krishna, the stormy petrel of Carnatic music, and this year's winner of The Music Academy, Madras's prestigious Sangita Kalanidhi award, is an ardent artist and an avid activist.

As an artist he is rooted in tradition but his vision is new, seeking boundless horizons. He is nourished by the past but not circumscribed by it. Like a gushing mountain stream ever refreshing but bound by its banks. As an activist, both in the domain of music and on societal and civic issues, he espouses causes, amplifying the voice of the voiceless. He ruffles the feathers of the conservatives on the concert stage and those in power on civic platforms. Some would say he delights in poking the bull in the eyes.

The artiste's stage

Any concert of Mr. Krishna is always teasingly enchanting. It is also provoking, disturbing, awakening. It is a feast for the purists of the art form, delightful for the avant-garde and is full of surprises to the devout believers who are pantheistic in their outlook. But the religious fanatics bristle at his irreverence toward long-held beliefs and feel outraged. The atheists and agnostics celebrate his audacity when he cocks a snook at the conservatives. The old, who are true connoisseurs of classical music, grudgingly admire him, even though he is unconventional. Modern youth who are drawn to classical music and students of that art adore him.

He has a huge fan base. He is gifted, charismatic and daring. He is an iconoclast but his music and his views have evolved and are shaped by eclectic interests and deep research. He is an author of books on classical music, art and the artisans of classical musical instruments and their loving devotion to their age-old craft and their discrimination, alienation, neglect and obscurity. He is a prolific writer, tireless speaker on art and contemporary issues, and an intrepid activist. His works have drawn critical acclaim as well as ire.

His music and his repertoire of actions always baffle you. He is an unbeliever who mesmerises you when he sings devotional songs in temple festivals. He is an innovator and a disruptor who does not subvert. It is when he challenges and questions our cultural and social spaces in the realm of art and its orthodoxies, gender bias and casteism, its hypocrisies and its undercurrent of politics that are often exclusive, divisive and discriminatory and holds a mirror to us that we are offended.

He may be a non-conformist. He may at times be abrasive and arrogant. He may not draw universal praise but he sparks lively debate and enriches art by celebrating various genres – folk, puranic, classical, *Dasa* and *Vachana sahitya*, ancient and navodaya and Dalit poetry, Tamil songs, Sanskrit hymns and *shlokas* from epics, even Sufi, drawn from various languages and regions of India.

> The polarisation over the conferment of a title is unfortunate as music can become a many-splendoured offering only through a cross-fertilisation of ideas and cultures

For instance, in one concert, in Bengaluru, after singing classical *ragas* and compositions of the Trinity (of Tyagaraja, Dikshitar and Syama Sastri) and Purandara Dasa and a bouquet of Tamil songs including one by Perumal Murugan, he sang a composition of saint reformer Narayana Guru from Kerala and a lilting, melodious Urdu bhajan on Kanhaiya (Krishna) by Pakistani poet Hafeez Jalandhari who has also penned the national anthem of Pakistan. This may have seemed sacrilegious to the orthodox. Mr. Krishna says music is universal.

He is a serious student of the art, a purist when he sings the major *ragas* and compositions, and one who is constantly experimenting and transcending himself in every concert by seeking to explore new frontiers. His mastery and rendition of *kritis*, *ragas*, *alapanas*, *tanam*, *pallavis*, *kalpanaswaras* and *neravals* are refreshing and cast a spell on the audience.

A polarisation

The most coveted Sangita Kalanidhi title conferred on him has stirred up a hornet's nest among musicians and music enthusiasts. In fact social media seems to be driving the polarisation among musicians along abominable lines: right-wing politics and religiosity pitted against the ideological left and liberals; zealots of Brahminical ways and 'Hindutva' persuasion versus the followers of Periyar. With the citadel of action being Chennai, even the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam is ranged against the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

In the reactions in the world of music, the sisters, Ranjani and Gayatri, who are popular classical singers, were first off the block in going public about withdrawing from the annual conference later in the year, which is hosted by the Music Academy. Among the points they raised were that they could not overlook Mr. Krishna's glorification of an anti-Brahmin persona such as EVR (Periyar). Vidwan N. Ravikiran, recipient of the Sangita Kalanidhi in 2017 announced that he would return the award as Mr. Krishna was 'trying to polarise and destabilise Indian classical music'. A few authors with leanings toward the ideologies and politics of the BJP and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh rallied behind these artistes and attacked the Music Academy for dishonouring itself by honouring a 'Brahmin hater' and rabble-rouser.

In a letter addressed to Ms. Ranjani and Ms. Gayatri, the President, The Music Academy, Madras, N. Murali, firmly stated that, "The choice of Sangita Kalanidhi made year after year is a prerogative of The Music Academy and has always been made after careful deliberation, with the sole criterion being musical excellence demonstrated over a significant and sustained career. This year the Executive Committee of the Academy chose T.M. Krishna for this accolade based on his excellence in music over a long career, with no extraneous factors influencing our choice."

We will be smothering the creativity of future generations if, in the name of tradition, we cultivate a certain bigotry imprisoned by the habit of a past generation. True art is not a magnificent tomb brooding over the immemorial past. Music, like art, belongs to the procession of life, and is as different as a tree is from a seed. It is like the river, ever old and ever new. It has a wealth of inheritance. It must constantly evolve and burst forth with new blossoms and continually be nourished by the past.

Mr. Krishna may have erred in boycotting the Music Academy and the various sabhas during the December festival held every year just as those who are now withdrawing from the festival and returning their awards are likely to be making a similar mistake.

The role of the artiste

There are many artistes who are content and totally immersed only in their art and innovate within its confines. There are also others who are bold activist reformers who challenge their traditional art forms, fight the inequities and prejudices that prevail in communities and cultural spaces, and also speak out against injustices in society in the wider context of politics and government. History has many examples of great poets, artistes and philosophers who were all rebels who went beyond their chosen calling.

What is the role of an artiste when he becomes an activist and when those roles overlap? As Camus said eloquently, "Considered as artists, we perhaps have no role to play in the world. But considered as men, yes... We must simultaneously serve both suffering and beauty."

All those invested in music and the arts, and the Academy, the various vibrant sabhas that patronise artistes, and the artistes themselves must rise above their differences and come together with humility in a spiritual quest to enrich music through dialogue, debate and assimilation. We must leave our inheritance richer for future generations. Art can become a many-splendoured offering only through a cross-fertilisation of ideas and cultures or it will languish because of 'intellectual incest'.

Boycotting and responding with misplaced chauvinism is churlish on both sides of the divide. To recall Tagore's words, "The role of an artist is to take a creative part in the festival of life, to give expression to the infinite in man."

China, a 'want-to-be' superpower

Kabir Taneja

is Fellow, Strategic Studies Programme, Observer Research Foundation

The first anniversary of the China-brokered détente between Saudi Arabia and Iran in March 2023 passed without much fanfare. The war in Gaza has enveloped almost all regional political and diplomatic capacities across the Persian Gulf, while also highlighting international actors and their core interests amidst this fallout. Beijing has taken a position that is clearly pro-Palestine, in line with its historical standing on the issue, alienating its relations with Israel.

However, in China's state-controlled media, Chinese President Xi Jinping's success in bringing together Riyadh and Tehran was highlighted as an institutional Chinese position to promote peace. In a glowing piece on the anniversary which quoted regional analysts who underscored a sense of fatigue with the West's 'conditional' relations, the Chinese media outlet Xinhua said, "Today, China's advocacy for peace still resonates with Middle East countries."

Beijing's aims

A push towards 'mediation diplomacy' has been an aspirational design for China on two major fronts. First, it is to position itself as an antithesis to what Beijing sees as decades worth of western interventionist policies, specifically in a region such as West Asia, where conflict has direct correlation with colonial history. Second, it is to increase its own geopolitical weight as a responsible international actor and power. However, both these aims have been confronted by realities around the war in Gaza as China has taken a clear stance towards the Arab side and has not condemned Hamas by name. Much of the reasoning behind this is to counter long-standing American influence and to take advantage of crevasses in regional diplomacy, specifically by the likes of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which are looking to chart their own paths of strategic autonomy and willing to partner with Beijing despite having close security ties with Washington DC.

In early 2023, Wang Yi (director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee) gave his endorsement to a plan to set up a new China-backed international mediation organisation headquartered in Hong Kong. According to reports, Algeria, Belarus, Cambodia, Djibouti, Indonesia, Laos, Pakistan, Serbia and Sudan were signatories to the initial statement as a preparatory office was launched. The Chinese establishment hopes to link the mediation initiative to its expansive economic corridor, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The BRI has extensive membership in West Asia as well, with Iran, Saudi Arabia and the UAE among others being part of China's economic highways. Israel, being heavily reliant on the United States for its security, is not a signatory. However, Israel's embattled Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu aired the fact last year that China had invited him for a state visit.

> Other than dangling a cheque book, Beijing seems risk averse and has few answers to long-standing geopolitical flashpoints

China's absence in the Red Sea crisis

The war in Gaza has drawn strong red lines between China and Israel. This raises interesting questions on the exact role Beijing played in the Saudi-Iran détente. The probability of China being pulled into the process by Riyadh and Tehran, rather than actively brokering a deal, remains high. China has also been absent through the crisis in the Red Sea, where predominantly western naval forces have attempted to maintain the free flow of trade in this critical waterway. Contrarily, reports have suggested that Yemen-based Houthis were not targeting Chinese and Russian ships, suggesting a bypass potentially using leverages that Beijing has with its close partner Iran despite Tehran's calls for the Yemeni militia to cease attacks. If so, it shows China's crafty diplomacy was to predominantly protect its own interests and not wade into the crisis as an influential power looking to use its position to broker peace or even a ceasefire. Much of this kind of actual heavy lifting remains at the doorsteps of the White House.

This then begs the question. What is China's actual role in the more challenging geopolitical regions such as West Asia? Beijing's support for the Palestinian cause without criticising Hamas practically aligns with the larger Arab posture. This stands against U.S. support for Israel, which is increasingly being criticised for its absolutist nature as the body count in Gaza continues to grow. China's intent for 'mediation' is non-existent in high-stake conflicts and is un-aspirational beyond the strategic aim of showcasing western, and, more specifically, American power and influence, as detrimental to both international stability and security.

In perspective

China seems content with predominantly displacing American hegemony without replacing it. Even a perception of being a 'soft hegemon' in the region will stand starkly against Chinese grandstanding against western policies. This is despite the fact that Beijing utilised the 'war on terror'-era to build closer ties with the U.S. and benefit its own security concerns regarding radicalisation and terrorism narratives around its restive Xinjiang region. But once again, these were all narrow geostrategic aims. Scholars Sheena Chestnut Greitens and Isaac Kardon have highlighted in their work on how China, for its partner states, is more about their internal security rather than external – that is, prioritising political security of regimes rather than states. Arguably, this could appropriately explain what formalised Chinese mediation would aim for.

The war in Gaza colours Beijing as still being a 'want-to-be' superpower. Being risk averse and having a lack of alternatives to the historical West-centric policies (which it chides as being detrimental to global security and prosperity) makes Beijing stand out as hollow. Other than offering a sizeable cheque book, China still has few answers as substitutes to long-standing geopolitical flashpoints. For now, despite its size, it remains a utilitarian superpower for others to hedge against rather than being an upcoming traditional superpower.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Arrest, rally plan

The decision of the INDIA bloc to take out a rally to protest the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister and AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal (March 25) is ill-conceived. The contention that the arrest is political vendetta is unimpressive especially as Mr. Kejriwal did not respond to the Enforcement Directorate's summons. Had he responded to the summons on time, he would have been in a position of strength. One must also not forget that unless the ED has substantial proof, it does not accost an individual. There must be enough material with the ED to hold Mr. Kejriwal guilty. The protest rally will be a blot on Mr. Kejriwal's persona as a clean politician.

V. Lakshmanan,
Tirupur, Tamil Nadu

The planned rally by the INDIA bloc on March 31 will send a strong signal to the ruling party at the Centre after the series of moves against the Aam Aadmi Party. There are other vital issues that can be raised. With the BJP emerging unchallenged, there needs to be a movement with resolute aim to take on the party.

M.Y. Shariff,
Chennai

What makes Mr. Kejriwal's arrest particularly alarming is the striking resemblance it bears to the tactics employed during the Emergency era. It also highlights the broader erosion of democratic norms in India. His arrest must serve as a rallying point for all who cherish freedom and democracy.

Aryan Gulati,
Meerut, Uttar Pradesh

Speech and remarks

Our political representatives seem to be breaching the line in their election speeches by using abusive language and being critical in a derogatory and harmful manner. Speech is a mighty force and our leaders must be mindful of this.

A.J. Rangarajan,
Chennai

Understanding what the right to equality promises

Aditya Phalnikar

is a Research Fellow at the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy. Views expressed are personal

The rules of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019, were recently notified. This law has been challenged before the Supreme Court on the grounds that it violates Article 14 of the Constitution. Both opposition to it and support for it have drowned a key aspect of this case. This is an opportunity for the Court to fundamentally reshape not just the citizenship law, but also the way in which it judges alleged violations of the constitutional guarantee of equality.

The classification test

The classical test to judge these violations is the 'reasonable classification' test, where the Court asks whether there is a clear way to differentiate members of one class from another, and then whether there is a clear relation between making this distinction and achieving the goal that the government wishes to achieve. When the Bill was being debated in Parliament, the Home Minister had declared that it was consistent with the test given above – it applied to persecuted minorities who had fled to India from geographically connected nations, and the purpose was to provide these minorities with full citizenship rights in India. His argument is not legally unsound. One could, of course, argue that the 'persecuted minorities' argument ought to extend to, say, the Ahmadiyya Muslims in Pakistan as well. This would ordinarily be fatal to the Home Minister's argument. But the Court has generally allowed a great deal of latitude to the state while dealing with a potential equality law violation. In *Charanjit Lal Chowdhury v. Union of India* (1950), for instance, the Court declared that "the Legislature is free to recognise degrees of harm and it may confine its restrictions to those cases where the harm is deemed to be the clearest." If we go by this standard, the CAA might be constitutional. And that is where the problem lies.

The classification test is a judicial import from the U.S. dating back to 1950. It has since been crystallised, refined, developed, and critiqued to the point where it has become an inseparable part of equality jurisprudence. Indeed, from being a way of interpreting our equality guarantee, it has almost become our equality guarantee.

What is forgotten is that the classification test is a tool that the Court employs to decide what state action would violate equality. The real protection afforded by the Constitution, however, is not the test; it is what the test is used for. Equality is a moving target, and the reasonable classification test was developed to hit it most accurately. But this does not always happen. The CAA may pass this test, and yet not satisfy our constitutional conscience. The source of our pain is the fact that there are some persecuted minorities who are excluded for no apparent reason. This is unsettling also because the discrimination here is on the basis of religion, which is against any understanding of secularism.

The classification test, in its most repeated form, does not necessarily account for any of this. This is not to say that it never can. While reading down Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, as he was then, stated that Article 14 contains "a powerful statement of values", and that to "reduce it to a formal exercise of classification may miss the true value of equality". Other judges have also attempted to augment the classification test with more teeth. But these responses are stopgap. The test is either bent to suit more just outcomes, or a new test is developed. The 'manifest arbitrariness' test developed by the Court in recent cases is a response of the latter kind, and is unfortunately too broad to provide any concrete guidance. Unlike the reasonable classification test, it has no shape or form. The most that the Court has said about the content of this test is that what is "without adequate determining policy or principle" is manifestly arbitrary. These concepts are, on the face of it, susceptible to multiple interpretations – hardly a suitable fit for a judicial test which is supposed to crystallise an ethereal concept like equality.

What is required instead is a comprehensive re-understanding of what the right to equality promises. This does not necessarily mean that the old test needs erasure, but it needs a radical redevelopment. The Court needs to go beyond asking the questions it already does. It will have to develop the constitutional idea of equality more thoroughly. The old idea of 'treating equals equally and unequals unequally' has shown its deficiencies. This will be a deeply theoretical exercise, but it is necessary for a more robust constitutionalism.

The Court will also have to ask more probing questions of the state, such as why Ahmadiyya Muslims have been excluded and the exact number of immigrants who have come from each of these countries (from each religion). Each of these will test the state's purported justifications against the new idea of equality. These questions may be asked in the classification test as well, but are not its core components. Their application depends upon active judicial engagement with the values flowing from Article 14. Leaving crucial questions of constitutional law open to such discretion is incorrect. This is the core of the problem.

Opportunity for a clear break

The legal and constitutional challenge to CAA is a timely opportunity for this task because the Act goes against many of our beliefs of what equality entails, and what the Constitution requires from the government. Questions of this magnitude are better answered with a clear distinction between the right and the test. Only the former is inviolable.

The Court has an opportunity to reshape not just the citizenship law, but also the way in which it judges alleged violations of our constitutional guarantee of equality

The LDF's big weapon against the UDF

The anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act debates have given the Left Front a boost

STATE OF PLAY

S.R. Praveen
praveen.sr@thehindu.co.in

On March 11, when the Union government notified the rules for the implementation of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019, just days ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, there was little doubt about its real intent. While the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), with an eye on votes, proudly owned the move, the reaction of its Kerala unit has been muted given the significant minority population in the State.

The ruling Left Democratic Front (LDF) in Kerala was quick to criticise the CAA and place itself as the bulwark against the Sangh Parivar's designs, followed by the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF), even though both the fronts called the notification a diversion from the electoral bonds issue. While the LDF government reiterated that the CAA and the National Register of Citizens will not be implemented in Kerala, Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee president K. Sudhakaran said that the CAA will be "thrown into the Arabian Sea" if INDIA comes to power.

All of a sudden, every other election issue, whether the LDF's campaign over the Union government's alleged financial embargo of Kerala or the UDF's long list of complaints about the State government, seem to have been pushed to the background with the CAA taking the spotlight. Over the past week, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has addressed anti-CAA rallies in various districts. The UDF has also been organising protest marches, especially in the northern districts, which

have a higher concentration of minorities.

The State government has also moved the Supreme Court seeking an injunction against the implementation of the CAA, saying it will lead to hostile discrimination. Mr. Vijayan, who has branded the law a challenge to the very idea of India, has portrayed it as part of the Sangh Parivar's long-time agenda of turning Muslims into second-class citizens by taking away their basic rights. He has also lashed out at the Congress saying the party had not put up sufficient resistance against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill in Parliament and outside.

In December 2019, at the beginning of the anti-CAA movement, Mr. Vijayan and Ramesh Chennithala, who was the Opposition leader, had led a joint protest. The Kerala Assembly had also unanimously passed a resolution against the Bill. But since then, the INDIA bloc partners do not see eye to eye on this issue. The current Opposition leader, V.D. Satheesan, has accused the Chief Minister of misleading the public and has asserted that Congress MPs have strongly protested against the CAA. States have little role in implementing the CAA and only a Congress-led INDIA bloc government can annul it, he added.

Mr. Satheesan also questioned Mr. Vijayan's own sincerity in opposing CAA, as the government failed to withdraw the cases registered against people, numbering about 800, who were part of anti-CAA protests in 2019. To this charge, Mr. Vijayan responded saying 629 of these cases were quashed by the courts, and the government has already agreed to withdraw 84 others. The only cases that have not been withdrawn are those involving serious offences, he said.

BJP State President K. Surendran believes that the withdrawal of cases against anti-CAA protesters is part of the LDF's attempts at minority appeasement. The BJP is also planning to approach the Election Commission of India over the alleged violations of the Model Code of Conduct in withdrawing these cases. Mr. Surendran has reiterated the national leadership's argument that the CAA does not deny citizenship to any particular community.

The debate is expected to have a bearing on the voting patterns of the State's minority population. For the LDF, the anti-CAA debates have helped push to the sidelines discussions on contentious State-specific issues that could drive anti-incumbency. The debates have also given the LDF, which won just one seat in 2019, yet another opportunity to question the Congress's genuineness on issues concerning minorities, such as the national leadership's dithering over the Ayodhya temple consecration, as well the large number of defections of Congress leaders to the BJP. The Congress is still struggling to shed its "soft Hindutva" tag. In 2019, the minorities overwhelmingly voted in favour of the UDF following Rahul Gandhi's candidature from Wayanad, but it remains to be seen whether such a wave can be recreated this time.

Water levels less than 25% in many major dams in the south

With most major dams in the State filled to close to 50% of their capacity, Kerala is the only exception

DATA POINT

Rebecca Rose Varghese & Vignesh Radhakrishnan

Most of the major reservoirs in the southern States of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana are filled to only 25% of their capacity or less. This is worrying as peak summer is round the corner. Some large dams such as the Tungabhadra in Karnataka and the Nagarjuna Sagar on the Andhra Pradesh-Telangana border are filled to 5% or less of their full capacity. Other large dams such as Mettur in Tamil Nadu and Srisailam on the Andhra Pradesh-Telangana border are also filled to less than 30% of their capacity. The water crisis in Bengaluru may soon hit other urban centres and rural areas if this situation continues in the following days.

Across India, the current water level in 150 primary reservoirs put together as a share of their total capacity stood at 38%, according to the latest weekly bulletin by the Central Water Commission. **Chart 1** shows a region-wise comparison of the current storage levels as a share of the total capacities of reservoirs. It also compares the current water levels with last year's levels, as well as with the 10-year average.

The chart shows that the southern region is impacted the most. All the reservoirs put together are filled to only 23% of their capacity in this region, which is about 17% points lower than the levels recorded last year and 9 points lower than the 10-year average. No other region – central, west, east, or north – shows such a drastic difference in levels compared to last year as well as the 10-year average. For instance, in the northern and central regions, the reservoirs are filled to 33% and 46% of their capacities, respectively, similar to the 10-year average levels recorded in those regions. In the western region, the reservoirs are filled to 45% of their capacity, slightly higher than their 10-year average, while the 49% recorded in the eastern region was only marginally lower than the 10-year average.

Among the southern States, a comparison of the capacities of individual reservoirs with their current storage shows that water levels in many are dangerously low. **Charts 2, 3, and 4** show the current storage levels as a share of the total capacity of major dams (chosen based on their capacities), in Andhra Pradesh-Telangana, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. The list is limited to those reservoirs observed by the Central Water Commission in these States.

The Linganamakki reservoir in Karnataka's Shivamogga district, with a total capacity of 4.3 lakh crore litres of water, is currently filled to just 22%. The Supa reservoir in Karnataka's Uttara Kannada district, with a total capacity of 4.1 lakh crore litres, is filled to only 36%. The Tungabhadra dam in Vijayanagara district of Karnataka, with a total capacity of 3.2 lakh crore litres, is filled to only 5%.

The Srisailam reservoir on the Andhra Pradesh-Telangana border, with a capacity of 6 lakh crore litres, is filled to only 15%, whereas the Nagarjuna Sagar dam on the same border, with a capacity of 5.1 lakh crore litres, is filled to a mere 4%.

The Mettur dam in Salem district of Tamil Nadu, with a full capacity of 2.65 lakh crore litres, is filled to 28%.

Kerala is the only exception among the southern States, with most of its major dams filled to at least 50% of their capacities, as shown in **Chart 5.** The Idukki reservoir is filled to 47%, the Idamalayar dam to 48%, and the Kallada and Kakki reservoirs to 50%.

It is important to note that, like Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, most districts in Kerala too recorded deficient rainfall during the south-west monsoon last year, as shown in **Table 6**.

In troubled waters

The data for the charts were sourced from the latest weekly bulletin published by the Central Water Commission

Chart 1: The chart shows a region-wise comparison of the current storage levels as a share of the total capacities of reservoirs. It also compares the current water levels with last year's levels and the 10-year average

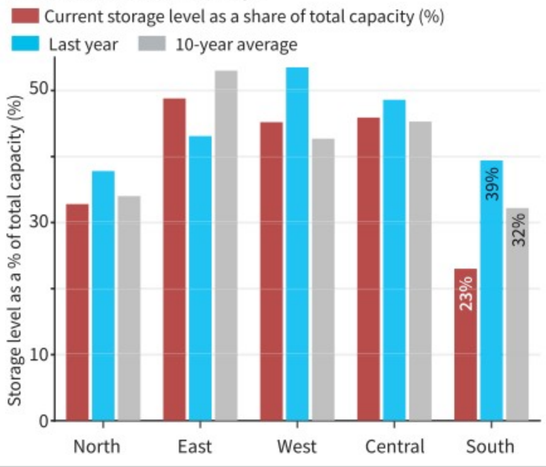
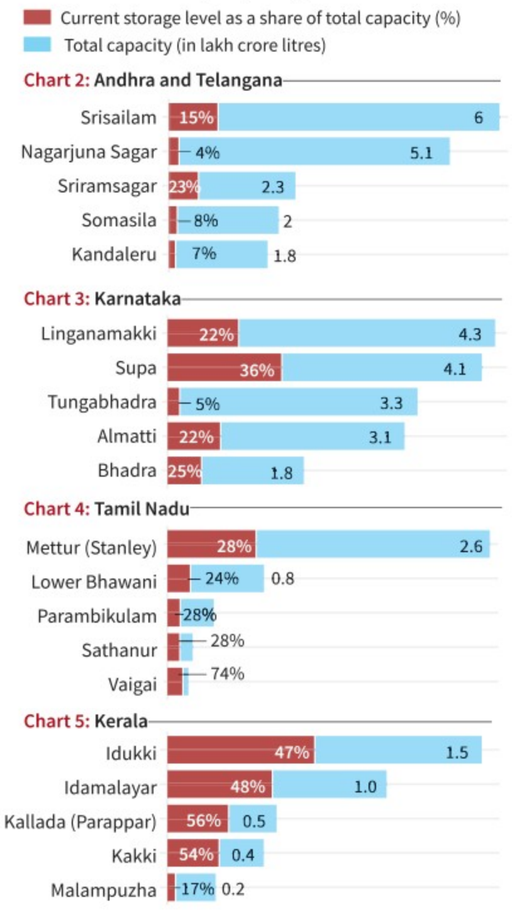


Table 6: The table shows the % of districts, across various levels of rainfall deficits, during the 2023 south-west monsoon. For instance, in about 27% districts of Kerala, rainfall deficit during last monsoon was 40% or more

State	Deficit				No deficit
	40% or more	25%-40%	15%-25%	<15%	
Andhra	5%	5%	32%	21%	37%
Karnataka	6%	13%	48%	26%	6%
Kerala	27%	20%	40%	13%	-
Tamil Nadu	3%	11%	13%	16%	58%
Telangana	-	7%	2%	27%	63%

Chart 2,3,4,5: The charts show the current storage levels as a share of the total capacity of major dams in southern States



FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 26, 1974

'Base in Indian Ocean will create tension'

Madras, March 25: Vice-Admiral K.L. Kulkarni Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command, said here to-day that the Indian Ocean had been declared an area of peace and a 1971 United Nations resolution supported it. If the super-powers and the regional powers patrolled this area, "certainly there will be a lot of tension, and we will be very much concerned about it," he added.

The Vice-Admiral told a press conference that the Government of India's policy was quite clear on this issue, in that the Indian Ocean should be a zone of peace.

Replying to a question, the Vice-Admiral said: "Diego Garcia does not directly affect our defence capabilities. It does affect, if tensions are created in the area by the movement of ships belonging to the super-powers. The littoral States in the Gulf area are arming themselves with the latest sophisticated weapons, and in the context of the geographical situation in which India is placed, it will certainly affect us."

The Vice-Admiral pointed out that France and the Soviet Union had stated that they would send their ships to cruise in the Indian Ocean. "It is our area much more than others," he said.

The Vice-Admiral said the Andaman and Nicobar Islands were the "eastern sentinel" of the country and "their defence is my major concern at the Eastern Naval Commander."

He said negotiations were in an advanced stage regarding collaboration arrangements with certain foreign countries to build patrol boats. Once the decision was taken, the Mazagon Docks at Bombay would be entrusted with building these boats.

Replying to questions he said a new era of naval aviation would be developed in the 1980s. The Indian Navy's aircraft carrier was certainly not out-dated. "What we need is modern types of aircraft that can be deployed from the ship," he added.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MARCH 26, 1924

Steel pipes for Tatas

London, Mar. 25: An order which is stated to be the biggest of its kind ever placed in Britain and perhaps in the world has been lodged with the British Mannesmann Tube Company for steel pipes in connection with the Tata Hydroelectric Scheme.

From Page One

UN demands ceasefire in Gaza during Ramzan

Because Ramzan ends next month, the ceasefire demand would last for just two weeks, though the draft says the pause in fighting should lead "to a permanent sustainable ceasefire".

Monday's resolution, put forward by the 10 elected council members, was backed by Russia and China and the 22-nation Arab Group at the UN. Algeria's UN Ambassador, the Arab representative on the council, thanked the council for "finally" demanding a ceasefire.

Shortly before Monday's vote, the elected members changed the final draft resolution to drop the word "permanent" from its demand that a Ramzan ceasefire will lead to "a permanent sustainable ceasefire", apparently at the request of the U.S.

EU launches probe against tech giants

The third probe is about whether Apple allows its users enough choice, including in terms of ease of uninstalling apps and changing default settings. Of particular concern was that the web browser choice screen deprived end users of making fully informed choices, Ms Vestager said. Apple also did not make several of its apps, such as 'Photos' un-installable and prevents users from changing their default status (e.g. Cloud), as required by the DMA, she added.

Apple said it was "confident" its plan complied with the DMA.

"Teams across Apple have created a wide range of new developer capabilities, features, and tools to comply with the regulation," an Apple spokesperson told *The Hindu* via email.

The fourth investigation is regarding what Mr Breton called Meta's "pay or consent" policy - where users have to pay if they want to use Facebook and Instagram without targeted advertising.

"But the DMA is very clear: gatekeepers must obtain users' consent to use their personal data across different services. And this consent must be free," he said.

The fifth inquiry is into whether Alphabet (Google's parent company) is prioritising its own services in Google Search. Mr Breton specifically listed Google Shopping, Google Flights, and Google Hotels, possibly benefitting from preferential treatment. The investigation is scheduled to be completed within 12 months.

'Will Sangh Parivar give up *Bharat Mata Ki Jai*'

The Chief Minister said that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had gone abroad at the crucial time of the CAA protests. "The Congress did not take part in the anti-CAA protests with sincerity," he said.

BJP complains to EC

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) State executive member K.K. Surendran complained to the Election Commission against the Chief Minister for alleged violation of the Model Code of Conduct by using religion during his election campaign.

In a letter sent to the Chief Election Commissioner, he alleged that a rally taken out by the CPI (M) at Malappuram on Monday was with the intention of instilling fear and hatred in the Muslim community, especially during Ramzan.

Kerala veterinary varsity V-C resigns

Mr. Khan, the Chancellor of State-run universities, took a dim view of the Vice-Chancellor's decision to "exonerate" the students, who were among the 90 students suspended in connection with the case. Finding that the move had been made without seeking legal opinion, the Governor also sought a detailed report from the Vice-Chancellor on his decision. In his resignation letter submitted to the Raj Bhavan, Dr. Saseendran cited personal reasons for his decision.

Sidharthan's father T. Jayaprakash slammed the move to reinstate students and accused Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan of duping the family after assuring them that the case would be referred to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

He also visited the Governor at the Raj Bhavan and appealed for his intervention in the case. He said that he received assurance that no unlawful decision would be permitted in the issue.

The developments assumed a political tinge after BJP leader and National Democratic Alliance (NDA)'s candidate for the Thiruvananthapuram Lok Sabha constituency Rajeev Chandrasekhar faulted the State government for allegedly failing to hand over the case to the CBI.

Speaking to mediapersons shortly after Mr. Jayaprakash met him at the NDA election committee office, he asked whether the promise had been made by the Chief Minister for electoral gains.

Official sources have clarified that the State government had formally written to the CBI on March 16 to refer the case to the agency. The Home Department also attached a copy of the gazette notification issued in this regard.

The Opposition Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) also condemned the move to reinstate the students.

Nari shakti only in BJP's slogan, not action: Cong.

Jairam Ramesh questions the saffron party's record in implementing welfare schemes for women, lists out the Modi government's failures, from 'doubling of crime to unemployment'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh accused the WCD Ministry of waking up to crimes only in non-BJP-ruled States. FILE PHOTO

On a day when an objectionable post by the Congress' social media in-charge Supriya Shrinate against actor and BJP candidate from the Mandi Lok Sabha seat, Kangana Ranaut, triggered outrage, the Congress attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government for reducing the budget of women-centred welfare schemes, flagging five key problems.

Ms. Shrinate later clarified that the post had been authored by someone who had access to her social media accounts.

In a 11-part post on X, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh questioned the Modi government's record in the past 10 years in implementing various women-centric schemes. He said the BJP's slogan of "*nari shakti*" (women empowerment) remained empty words without real action.

"For 10 years, the Ministry of Women and Child Development [MWCD] has seen only incompetence, apathy, and an anti-women mindset. While the Minister herself remains silent as women across India are assaulted, waking up only for crimes in non-BJP-ruled states, her Ministry diverts funds away from necessary schemes and hardworking women," the Congress leader wrote.

Mr. Ramesh also listed out the five "failures" – doubling of crime against women and children, shrinking budget and underutilisation of funds, low pay and ill-treatment of anganwadi workers, rising anaemia among women and children, and unemployment and loss of income among women.

Crimes on the rise

"Crime against women has almost doubled in the last 10 years – from 2.4 lakh crimes in 2012 to 4.5 lakh in 2022," he said.

He also pointed out that the non-lapsable Nirbhaya fund instituted for addressing the issue remained unutilised. Until 2022, he noted, only 35% of this fund had been used.

Mr. Ramesh also questioned the BJP government's silence over issues, including complaints of sexual harassment filed by women wrestlers against BJP Member of Parliament Brij Bhushan Singh, freeing convicted rapists of Bilkis Bano, and even the incidents of sexual assault that came to the fore in Manipur.

"Most concerning, while every day a new report of rape and assault comes from Manipur, the Prime Minister and the Minister for Women & Child Development have remained completely inertial. Even after horrific videos of women being assaulted have come out, no meaningful action has been taken. If she cannot even speak up on these issues, what exactly is the Minister of Women and Child Development doing?" he asked.

Dwindling budget

Mr. Ramesh further pointed out that in 2023-24, only 0.55% of the Union Budget had been allocated towards anganwadis, nutritional schemes, women's security, and childcare institutions.

This trend, he said, was not new – the MWCD's share of the Union Budget had been less than 0.75% for the last four years.

Cong. slams Centre for 'withholding' funds for Karnataka

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday accused the Modi government of withholding funds that should "rightfully" go to Karnataka, saying the people of the State were being made to pay the price just because they exercised their democratic right to elect a Congress government.

Congress general secretary in-charge, Communications, Jairam Ramesh alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was constantly trying to "throttle" the finances of States.

His remarks came after Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah alleged in a post on X that Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman was consistently denying the written word.

"The interim report of the 15 FC (Finance Commission) for 2020-21 sanctioned ₹6,764 crores for three states, viz Karnataka (₹5,495 crores), Telangana (₹723 crores) & Mizoram (₹546 crores)," he said.

"These grants were recommended not because of any special love for these states. These were recommended to ensure that no state receives a lower share in devolution in absolute numbers than the previous year," he noted.

In the final report, the 15th Finance Commission also recommended ₹6,000 crore for Karnataka – ₹3,000 crore for revival of waterbodies and ₹3,000 crore for the Peripheral Ring Road for Bengaluru, he said.

The Ministry of Finance refused to accept these two recommendations, thus denying the rightful share for Karnataka, Siddaramaiah said.

Tagging Mr. Siddaramaiah's post, Mr. Ramesh said the Modi government and its "remote-controlled Ministers" would cross every line to violate the spirit of federalism, sidestep the recommendations of constitutional bodies and unleash their political vendettas.

Though Karnataka contributed ₹4.3 lakh crore each year in taxes, the Finance Minister, incidentally a member of the Rajya Sabha from Karnataka, had rejected these recommendations and withheld almost ₹12,000 crore in funds that should rightfully go to the State, the Congress leader claimed.

Congress workers await candidate list for Himachal Pradesh

Vikas Vasudeva
CHANDIGARH

While the Congress on Monday announced another list of candidates for the Lok Sabha election, it is yet to name candidates for the four seats in Himachal Pradesh, a State that had recently witnessed political turbulence.

The BJP has announced candidates for all four seats – actor Kangana Ranaut for Mandi, the party's State vice-president Rajeev Bhardwaj for Kangra, MPs Anurag Thakur for Hamirpur, and Suresh Kashyap for Shimla.

The election to the four Lok Sabha seats will be held on June 1. Byelections for six Assembly constituencies that fell vacant after the disqualification of six Congress MLAs will also be held the same day.

The BJP swept all four parliamentary seats in the 2019 election. However, in 2021, its candidate lost the byelection in Mandi. It was won by Congress candidate Pratibha Singh, the party's Himachal unit chief and wife of former Chief Minister, the late Virbhadra Singh.

This time, Ms. Singh has declined to contest the election. For the other seats, insiders say the party can bet on fresh faces. "However, the delay in announcing candidates and recent factionalism, which led to six former Congress legislators cross-voting in favour of the BJP in the Rajya Sabha elections, will cause anxiety among the cadre," said a party leader.

In Shimla, Congress leader Thakur Ram Lal said the party will name candidates at the Central Election Committee meeting.

In show of support for Kejriwal, AAP launches social media campaign

Satvika Mahajan
NEW DELHI

All AAP members have been asked to change their display picture to that of Kejriwal behind bars. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

The Aam Aadmi Party launched a social media campaign on Monday in support of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and directed all its leaders and workers to change their display picture across social media platforms to reflect the theme.

Mr. Kejriwal was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on March 21 in a money laundering case linked to the now-scrapped Delhi Excise Policy.

AAP senior leader and Delhi Cabinet Minister Atishi said that those who supported Mr. Kejriwal and wanted to convey the message that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was eliminating democracy should join the campaign. By changing the display picture, people could show that the fight was not just Mr. Kejriwal's but that of the entire nation, a battle to save democracy and the Constitution, she added.

The slogan of the campaign was "Modi *ka sabse bada darr* – Kejriwal" (Modi's biggest fear – Kejriwal). Ms. Atishi said that the social media campaign would spread Mr. Kejriwal's ideology and inspiration to every household.

Leaders of the AAP and other members of the INDIA bloc have been protesting Mr. Kejriwal's arrest, calling it unconstitutional and illegal, especially ahead of the Lok Sabha election. The alliance had visited the Election Commission (EC) office to register their protest and seek its intervention.

"The CM has been falsely arrested by Mr. Modi, his Bharatiya Janata Party, and their political weapon, the ED, in a fabricated case. It's a case where even after two years of investigation, not a single penny of proceeds of crime has been recovered from any AAP leader," Ms. Atishi said.

She also pointed out that after two years of investigation, Mr. Kejriwal was arrested immediately after the announcement of the poll schedule.

"PM Modi wants to ensure that Mr. Kejriwal cannot challenge him. That's why he [Kejriwal] has been put in jail in false cases filed by the ED," she charged.

"Mr. Kejriwal is an idea, and while you can put one Arvind Kejriwal in jail, thousands more inspired by him will emerge from across the country," she added.

The party planned to hold a candle march on March 31 to protest the leader's arrest.

Ukrainian Minister invokes Gandhi for Indian backing

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

Dmytro Kuleba

The Foreign Minister of Ukraine, Dmytro Kuleba, said on Monday that supporting Ukraine's cause translates into supporting Gandhian ideals. The Minister announced in a recorded video message that he will be visiting India this week. Mr. Kuleba described India and Ukraine as two big democracies that will forge a stronger partnership.

"When Ukraine faced the Russian invasion two years ago, very few people believed we would survive, but we persisted and we will succeed in defending our freedom and independence. According to Gandhi, the future depends on what we do in the present. Hence supporting Ukraine today means supporting freedom and independence. Supporting the legacy of the great Mahatma," said Mr. Kuleba. He also extended greetings for Holi and said: "Today India celebrates Holi, the most beautiful and colourful spring holiday. I wish everyone a happy Holi!"

The Hindu had reported about the Ukrainian Foreign Minister's plan to visit New Delhi which comes as India has been invited to participate in a peace conference in Switzerland that will attempt a new initiative to end the war in Ukraine.

"Ukraine and India are two big democracies. I am certain, we are set to be good partners and friends. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the great Mahatma, was one of the most prominent figures of the 20th century. His ideal and final goals were freedom and independence and this is exactly what Ukrainians are fighting for today - freedom and independence," said Mr. Kuleba.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy have spoken over the phone. In addition, the Indian NSA Ajit Doval and Andriy Yermak, head of the Ukrainian President's office also held a discussion over the phone on March 16.

This Holi is special due to Ram temple inauguration: Shah

Press Trust of India
AHMEDABAD

Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel on March 25 celebrated Holi with party functionaries.

At the gathering in the BJP's Gandhinagar Lok Sabha office, located in Thaltej area, Mr. Shah and Mr. Patel applied colours on party leaders, including Rajya Sabha MP Mayant Nayak, MLA Amit Thakar, Gandhinagar Mayor Hitesh Makwana, Gujarat BJP's general secretary K.C. Patel and others of the women's wing.

Referring to the idol consecration of Ram Temple in Ayodhya on January 22, Mr. Shah said Holi this year was special for all "Ram bhakts" because the lord was celebrating the festival of colours after a gap of 500 years.

"This Holi is special for each and every devotee of Lord Ram. There is an old folk song which says *Holi Khele Raghuveera Avadh Mae*...Now after 500 years, Raghuveer is playing Holi at Avadh. This is a matter of great joy for everyone. My greetings to all the citizens on the occasion of Holi," he said at the gathering.

Addressing party workers engaged in his poll campaigning, Mr. Shah, who has been renominated from Gandhinagar, asked them to "be visible" among the masses. "I want to tell you that you all are doing a great job. But, always remember that your candidate will be less visible while you need to be more visible among the masses," he said.

Chargesheet filed against 3 terrorists: J&K Police

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

The J&K Police's special cell, the State Investigation Unit (SIU), produced a chargesheet against three terrorists and a militant associate on Monday.

The SIU spokesman said that a chargesheet was filed in case FIR No. 260/2023 at Police Station Pulwama under Sections 18, 20, 38, 39 and 40 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) against three terrorists.

They were identified as Ehsan Ul Haq Sheikh; Owais Feroz, who was at present in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir; and Abrarul-Islam, a resident of Pakistan. Besides, a terrorist associate, Ishtiyaq Nazir Dar, currently in custody, was also named in the chargesheet.

In 6th list, Congress names ex-BJP MLA to take on LS Speaker

Prahlad Gunjal is a close aide of former Rajasthan CM Vasundhara Raje; his candidature is expected to help Congress's fortunes in Hadoti region

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Former BJP MLA Prahlad Gunjal, who recently joined the Congress, will take on outgoing Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla in Rajasthan's Kota Lok Sabha seat, as the grand old party announced its sixth list of candidates on Monday.

With five names in the fresh list, the Congress has so far announced a total of 190 candidates.

The party also fielded Ramchandra Choudhary from Ajmer, Sudarshan Rawat from Rajsamand, and Damodar Gurjar from Bhilwara.

Former BJP MLA Prahlad Gunjal, second from left, with former Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and others. FILE PHOTO

Leg-up for party

Mr. Gunjal, who joined the Congress last Thursday in the presence of former Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and Rajasthan Congress chief Govind Singh Dotasra, was the MLA from Kota North twice but had lost the last Assembly polls.

A close aide of former Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje, his presence in the Congress is expected to benefit the party in the Hadoti region that includes districts like Bundi, Baran, Jhalawar and Kota.

The 25 Lok Sabha seats of Rajasthan will go to the polls in two phases – voting for 12 seats will be held in the first phase on April 19, while 13 seats will go to the polls on April 26.

The party has gone all out to break its record of the 2019 Lok Sabha election, in which it failed to win a single seat.

In the Tirunelveli seat of Tamil Nadu, C. Robert Bruce has been fielded by the Congress.

The party also announced that Tharahai Cuthbert will contest the byelection from Vilavancode Assembly constituency in the State.

Tamil Nadu will vote on April 19 for all 39 Lok Sabha seats in the State.

Sikkim CM's wife to fight Assembly polls; lone MP renominated

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

The ruling Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) has named Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang's wife, Krishna Kumari Rai, as a candidate for one of the State's 32 Assembly constituencies but dropped their son from another.

While Ms. Rai will contest from Namchi-Singhithang constituency, the Chief Minister will replace his son, Aditya Tamang, in Soreng-Chakung seat. The Chief Minister, who represents Poklok-Kamrang seat now, will also contest from Rhenock constituency.

"The decision to field the Chief Minister from two constituencies and his wife was taken by our party's parliamentary board," Assembly Speaker Arun Kumar Upreti told journalists in State capital Gangtok on Monday.

The SKM also renominated MP Indra Hang Subba for the lone Lok Sabha seat in the Himalayan State.

Baichung Bhutia

Bhaichung to contest

Former Chief Minister and founder-president of the Opposition Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) Pawan Kumar Chamling shifted from Namchi-Singhithang to Poklok-Kamrang apparently to avoid facing his successor's wife.

Among the prominent names in the SDF line-up are that of former Indian footballer Bhaichung Bhutia, who merged his Hamro Sikkim Party with the Chamling-led party in November 2023. Mr. Bhutia will face the SKM's Rikshal Dorjee Bhutia in the Barfung constituency.

Apart from 26 candidates for the Assembly election, the SDF nominated Prem Das Rai as its Lok Sabha candidate.

Although the SKM is a constituent of the National Democratic Alliance, the two parties will face off in 14 constituencies.

Assam MLA quits Cong. after wife denied ticket

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Assam MLA Bharat Chandra Narah resigned from the Congress on Monday after his wife, a former MP, was denied ticket for the Lok Sabha election.

His one-line resignation letter addressed to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge read: "I do hereby resign from the Indian National Congress with immediate effect."

Mr. Narah quit as the chairman of the party's State media cell on Sunday, 24 hours after the All India Congress Committee nominated Uday Shankar Hazarika as the candidate for the Lakhimpur seat.

Ranee Narah, the MLA's wife, represented Lakhimpur thrice before she lost to Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal of the BJP in 2014. Congress insiders said Mr. Narah was upset when the party high command snubbed his wife and fielded Mr. Hazarika, who switched over from the BJP a few months ago.

The Congress candidate will face the BJP's Pradan Baruah, also an import from the Congress seeking a third straight term.

INBRIEF

Beniwal fielded as INDIA bloc candidate from Nagaur seat

The Rashtriya Loktantrik Party (RLP) on Monday announced that its chief Hanuman Beniwal will be the INDIA bloc candidate for the Lok Sabha election from Rajasthan's Nagaur seat following an alliance formed with the Congress. Mr. Beniwal – elected as an MLA from Nagaur district's Khinvsar in 2023 – is likely to file his nomination papers on March 27. The Congress had left the Nagaur seat for the RLP in the list of candidates released on March 23. The two parties entered into an alliance in the State after intense negotiations lasting several days amid doubts created by the resignation of Mr. Beniwal's close confidant Ummeda Ram Beniwal from the RLP and his entry into the Congress. Several Congress leaders were reluctant to hold alliance talks with Mr. Beniwal, as he had been critical of the party after his victory in alliance with the BJP in the 2019 election. He later parted ways with the BJP during the farmers' agitation over the farm laws.

Tribal forum asks Kuki-Zo people not to contest LS polls

A tribal forum in ethnic strife-torn Manipur has urged the Kuki-Zo people to exercise their electoral franchise but refrain from contesting in the Lok Sabha election in April. The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) has been the voice of the ethnic communities belonging to the Kuki-Zo group since their conflict with the Meiteis broke out on May 3, 2023. "The ITLF Presidential Council, in consultation with its constituent member-tribes, has agreed that no member from the Kuki-Zo community should file nomination for the upcoming Lok Sabha election, considering the plight that we are facing," the forum said in a statement on Monday. "As Indian citizens, we advise our community members to exercise their right to franchise by voting but abstain from contesting from the Outer Manipur seat," it said.

BJD not executing Centre's schemes in Odisha: Pradhan

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Monday accused the ruling BJD in Odisha of not implementing the Centre's welfare schemes in the State. He also asserted that the BJP will win 15 to 18 Lok Sabha seats out of 21 in Odisha. "The State government has not been implementing the Centre's welfare schemes. We have urged the BJD several times to implement the programmes in Odisha, and have even sent delegations over this," Mr. Pradhan said. "The people of Odisha are keen on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership in the State," the Minister said. He also hit out at the BJD over "worsening" health infrastructure and non-availability of clean drinking water. He said Odisha will celebrate the 100th year of statehood in 2036 and the major election issues would be how the dreams of the youth are fulfilled, the role of women and farmers, and empowerment of the poor as the state reaches its centenary year. Odisha will have simultaneous Lok Sabha and Assembly elections from May 13. Mr. Pradhan has been nominated by the BJP from Sambalpur Lok Sabha seat. PTI

BJP MLA to enter the fray against party's Darjeeling nominee

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

A day after the BJP renominated MP Raju Bista from Darjeeling Lok Sabha seat, the party's Kurseong MLA, Bishnu Prasad Sharma, on Monday announced that he would contest as an Independent candidate against the official nominee.

Months ago, Mr. Sharma had demanded that a *bhumipatra* (son of the soil) be given the ticket from Darjeeling. Mr. Bista hails from Manipur and belongs to the Gurkha community.

"I will stand by what I had said in the past. Since the party has nominated an outsider, I will contest from Darjeeling as an Independent candidate," Mr. Sharma told *The Hindu*.

He said the last three MPs elected on BJP ticket, including Mr. Bista who won in 2019, were "outsiders". "The party wants to say that there is no deserving candidate among the 17 lakh people of Darjeeling. Or these candidates are sent to put a lid on the demands of the locals of Darjeeling," the BJP MLA said.

Elected from Kurseong in 2021 on a BJP ticket, Mr. Sharma has been one of most vocal legislators of the saffron party, who has been pushing for the creation of a separate State of Gorkhaland. The demand for Gorkhaland has dominated the politics of Darjeeling hills since 1980s.

The Darjeeling Lok Sabha seat comprises three constituencies Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong in the hills as well as Martigara-Naxalbari, Siliguri, Phansidewa, Chopra in the foothills. Since 2009, the people of the constituency have been electing BJP MPs – Jaswant Singh (2009-2014), S.S. Ahluwalia (2014-2019) and Raju Bista (2019-2024).

Bengal candidates add colours of Holi to their LS election campaign

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Candidates across political parties in West Bengal tried to make the most of the festival of Holi, adding colour to their campaign and connecting with the people in the run-up to the Lok Sabha election.

Covered in colours of their respective parties, candidates of the Trinamool Congress, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and the Left Front mingled with voters.

Smeared with green *gulaal* (colour) Trinamool candidate from Sreerampur and senior advocate Kalyan Banerjee was seen playing Holi with the people on the streets.

The Trinamool's Barrackpore candidate, Partha Bhowmick, was seen playing drums. Holi is celebrated as *Dol Jatra* in West Bengal. Holi also provided a festive opportunity for first-time Lok Sabha candidates, including Bapi Halder of the Trinamool, who is contesting from the Mathurapur Lok Sabha constituency in South 24 Parganas district.

Hues and shades: Trinamool Congress candidate Saayoni Ghosh celebrates Holi in her constituency, in Kolkata on Monday. ANI

The BJP leaders whose candidature was announced on Sunday also celebrated with great enthusiasm.

The BJP's candidate from Barrackpore, Arjun Singh, not only hit the streets along with his supporters, but also dared to challenge his political opponent, Trinamool's Partha Bhowmick, claiming that he would win the election with a margin of one lakh votes.

Former West Bengal Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh, who is contesting from Bardhaman Durgapur, was also seen soaking in the festivities. He said that he was taking the change of seat from Medinipur to Bardhaman Durgapur as a challenge.

Another entrant from the Trinamool, Tapas Roy, who was nominated from the Kolkata Uttar constituency, tried to make the most of the day by engaging with people while celebrating the festival of colours. Srijan Bhattacharyya, the CPI(M) candidate from Jadavpur, was smeared in red *gulaal* as he greeted people in the Baghajatin area.

Like the CPI(M)'s Jadavpur candidate, many candidates reached out to the electorate without party symbols and flags. With battle lines being drawn, the candidates also exchanged barbs. Debasree Choudhury, the MP from Raiganj, has been fielded by the BJP in Kolkata Dakshin against the Trinamool's sitting MP, Mala Roy. Both women MPs challenged each other to showcase the work they had done in their respective seats in the past five years.

Intra-party rivalry puts Congress's unity to the test in Chandrapur

Abhinay Deshpande
MUMBAI

Leader of Opposition Vijay Wadettiwar is said to have sought the ticket for his daughter Shivani

The Congress laid speculation to rest by announcing Pratibha Dhanorkar as its candidate for the Chandrapur Lok Sabha seat in Maharashtra on Saturday night. However, the announcement was marked by fierce intra-party battle in the local unit.

Ms. Dhanorkar, widow of Suresh 'Balu' Dhanorkar who was the lone winner for the Congress in Maharashtra in the 2019 general election, had got the nod due to her husband's untimely death. She is also the Congress MLA from Warora in the district and is said to have the support of State unit chief Nana Patole. The delay in announcing her candidature, which came three days before the last date for filing nomination papers (March 27), has been attributed to intense competition within the party, as local stalwart and Leader of the Opposition (LoP) Vijay Wadettiwar sought the ticket for his daughter Shivani.

Sources within the party told *The Hindu* that Mr. Wadettiwar conveyed to the high command that only his family could effectively challenge the BJP's Sudhir Mungantiwar, the incumbent Forest Minister in the Eknath Shinde-led government. "He strongly lobbied for his daughter," they said.

To resolve the impasse, the leadership proposed that Mr. Wadettiwar himself enter the fray. However, the Congress leader, a prominent figure in State politics, declined the offer, viewing the move to the national capital as "political retirement". Mr. Mungantiwar too was reportedly reluctant to enter the fray but was fielded by the BJP as it didn't want to take chances following defeat in the 2019 election.

"Looking at the low-key reception for Ms. Dhanorkar at Nagpur airport, the party leadership is now concerned that the LoP and his supporters may not actively campaign for her. Mr. Wadettiwar holds sway over nearly all Assembly constituencies in the district," said the Congress leader quoted earlier.

Amid "lack of support" from the local leaders, Ms. Dhanorkar is expected to leverage sympathy votes alongside the combined vote bank of the Maha Vikas Aghadi coalition. On the other hand, Mr. Mungantiwar will rely on his personal network, the Ram Temple and the "Modi" factor to secure victory.

Once a Congress stronghold, Vidarbha was breached by the BJP a decade ago but remains an important region for the grand old party. Top Congress leaders Mr. Wadettiwar, Mr. Patole, Nitin Raut, and Mukul Wasnik hail from the region, as do BJP's Nitin Gadkari, Devendra Fadnavis, Mr. Mungantiwar and State chief Chandrashekhar Bawankule.

Meanwhile, the Congress also fielded Nagpur West MLA Vikas Thakre against Union Minister Gadkari from Nagpur.

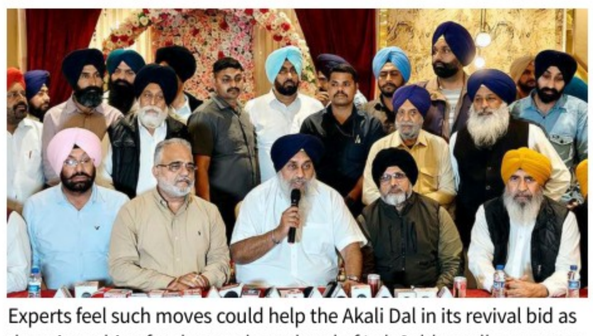
Akali Dal banks on *panthic* agenda to regain lost ground in Punjab

Vikas Vasudeva
CHANDIGARH

The Shiromani Akali Dal, which has been going through a rough patch following drubbings in the 2017 and 2022 Punjab Assembly elections, is seeking a return to its *panthic* (Sikh) agenda ahead of the Lok Sabha election.

At the recent core committee meeting, the Akali Dal resolved to focus on *panth* issues, in an effort to resurrect itself.

"The party will continue to put principles above politics and it will never deviate from its historic role as a champion of the interests of *Khalsa Panth* [Sikh community], minorities, as well as all Punjabis. At the same time, we will continue to devote all our energies towards preserving the atmosphere of peace and communal harmony... As the sole representative of the Sikhs and all Punjabis, the party will continue its fight for more powers and genuine autonomy to the States. We have never compromised on these interests nor will we let our guard down on these issues in future," read a resolution passed at the meeting, which was presided by party president Sukhbir Singh Badal.


Experts feel such moves could help the Akali Dal in its revival bid as there is nothing for them to lose ahead of Lok Sabha poll. FILE PHOTO

The party asserted that it would continue to champion the cause of farmers and farm labourers and said all promises made to them must be fulfilled. The resolution called for an end to interference in the religious affairs and institutions of the *Khalsa Panth*.

It urged the Union government to honour its written commitment to release Bandi Singhs (Sikh prisoners) who had completed their jail terms.

Experts feel such moves could help the party in its revival bid as there is nothing for them to lose.

"Expressing commitment to *panth* is a sort of rhetoric. If they [Akali Dal] don't have this rhetoric, then they would be hauled up by the *panthic* sections, so the aim is to cater to that section. They have everything to gain and nothing to lose now. They would have lost ground further if they had entered an alliance with the BJP. They have an opportunity to reinforce their credentials and acceptability among the Sikhs and Punjabis by and large. This is going to help Akalis gain some ground in the election," said Kehar Singh, former Head of the Department of Political Science, Punjabi University.

INBRIEF

PhD student from Haryana dies in London cycling crash

A 33-year-old former NITI Aayog employee pursuing her PhD at the London School of Economics and Political Science died in a road accident as she was hit by a truck while cycling back home from the university. Cheistha Kochhar, who was studying behavioural research, had moved to London from Gurugram last year, with her software engineer husband Prashant Gautam. While tributes have been pouring in for the "bright, brilliant and brave" student after her father shared the news of her death online, the Metropolitan Police in London are yet to officially name the victim and have appealed for witnesses to the "fatal collision" that took place on Clerkenwell Road, near the junction with Farringdon Road, on March 19. PTI

Disposal of offerings in rivers: NGT to hear plea on July 3

The National Green Tribunal has allowed the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) and the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board (UPPCB) to file within four weeks their responses regarding throwing worship offerings in rivers Ganga and Yamuna. The tribunal was hearing a matter where it had taken *suo motu* cognisance of a newspaper report regarding pollution in the two rivers because of the throwing of flowers and garlands offered in puja in their ghats. The Bench noted submissions on filing "a fresh proper response" covering the issue within four weeks. Allowing it, the Bench posted the matter on July 3 for further proceedings. PTI

Alcohol warning in Hindi, foreign films on the rise

Increased use of such warnings is a recent development; anti-tobacco watermark is mandatory since 2012; some States have laws to ensure that regional films carry anti-liquor disclaimers

Aroon Deep
NEW DELHI

In recent weeks, the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) has started requiring an increasing number of Hindi and foreign films to display anti-liquor watermarks for films that feature alcohol consumption, *The Hindu* has found, based on a review of cut lists of recent films issued by the censor board.

For instance, *All of Us Strangers*, a British film that extensively features alcohol abuse, has the warning onscreen for a significant duration of the film.

Next Goal Wins, a Hollywood film directed by Taika Watiti released in India last month, had the watermarks applied in liquor consumption scenes. *Dhaaak*, a Hindi film directed by Anees Barudwale, also had the requirement applied to its film in February. The horror film *Late Night with the Devil* also had the disclaimer applied this month.

Tobacco warnings are typically applied in Indian cinemas for all films where nicotine consumption is depicted. This requirement was introduced by the Health and Family Welfare Ministry through the Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Amendment Rules, 2012, which requires watermark warnings on scenes depicting nicotine consumption.

Stiff rules: A scene from the film *All of Us Strangers* that had the warning onscreen for a significant duration of the film. AP

Separately, some States have passed laws requiring locally produced films to display anti-liquor warnings. For instance, Kerala's Abkari Act has a jail penalty for films that do not display this warning, though this was proposed to be decriminalised and changed to a ₹50,000 fine through an amendment passed by the State Assembly last year. However, this amendment has not yet been cleared by the Governor. Tamil films display anti-liquor disclaimers for alcohol consumption scenes too.

In general, brand labels of liquor bottles are blurred across all languages by the CBFC, unless the brands are fictitious.

Legal authority

The legal authority for sanctioning films is with the Union government under the Constitution's Seventh Schedule, and this power has been assigned to the Information and Broadcasting Ministry under the Allocation of Business Rules. However, the CBFC, an autonomous body under the I&B Ministry, has largely respected and enforced State laws and Health Ministry rules on warnings during smoking and liquor consumption scenes in films.

The widening application of liquor warnings for foreign and Hindi films is a relatively recent development.

The requirement has been applied occasionally before, such as in 2014, when the film *Happy New Year* was required by the CBFC to include such a warning in order for the film to receive a 'U' rating – then CBFC chairperson Leela Samson had said that year that the 'U' rating (as opposed to the more mature 'U/A' and 'A' ratings) is the reason the watermarks were applied in this film.

The I&B Ministry in 1991 issued a notification that said that as a matter of principle, the censor board would ensure that "scenes which have the effect of justifying or glorifying drinking are not shown".

Arunachal Pradesh has always been part of China: Lin Jian

Press Trust of India
BEIJING

He was reacting to Jaishankar's remarks terming China's repeated claims on the State 'ludicrous'

China on Monday continued to claim that Arunachal Pradesh is part of its territory, notwithstanding India dismissing Beijing's claim as "absurd" and "ludicrous".

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian reiterated the claim while reacting to External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's assertions on Saturday, dismissing China's repeated claims on Arunachal Pradesh as "ludicrous" and that the frontier State was a "natural part of India".

"This is not a new issue. I mean China has laid claim, it has expanded its claim. The claims are ludicrous to begin with and remain ludicrous today," Mr. Jaishankar said in response to a question on the Arunachal issue after delivering a lecture at the prestigious Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) of the National University of Singapore (NUS).

"So, I think we've been very clear, very consistent on this. And I think you know that is something which will be part of the boundary discussions which are taking place," he said. Mr. Lin, replying to a question from the official media seeking his reactions to Mr. Jaishankar's comments, said the border between India and China has never been settled.

Zangnan, China's official name for Arunachal Pradesh, was always part of China before it was "illegally occupied" by India, he claimed.

China has all along had an effective administration over the region, he said.

Claiming that it is an "indisputable fact", he said India has established the "so-called Arunachal Pradesh" in 1987 on the illegally occupied territory.

"We have issued strong statements against their actions and stressed their action is ineffective and this position of China has not been changed", Mr. Lin said.

This is the fourth time this month that China has spoken about its claim over Arunachal Pradesh.

Beijing said it has lodged a diplomatic protest with India over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Arunachal Pradesh on March 9 reiterating its claim over the area.

Akali Dal chief meets kin of hooch victims in Sangrur

Press Trust of India
CHANDIGARH

Shiromani Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Singh Badal on Monday met the families of the Sangrur hooch victims and demanded aid of ₹20 lakh and a government job for each of them.

Twenty people have died due to suspected consumption of spurious liquor in Sangrur. Several others are undergoing treatment at hospitals.

Mr. Badal visited the villages and expressed grief over the deaths.

In a X post, he said, "I demand a murder case and strict action against Excise Minister Harpal Cheema, Home Minister Bhagwant Mann and all their accomplices under whose patronage the hooch was being sold openly."

Two devotees killed, seven injured in stampede at Una shrine following landslip

Press Trust of India
UNA

Charan Ganga will be off-limits to devotees till situation becomes normal, says Deputy Commissioner

Two devotees were killed and seven injured at a shrine in Himachal Pradesh's Una district on Monday following an early morning stampede triggered by a landslip, officials said.

The incident happened at Dera Baba Vadbhag Singh at Mairi village.

The shrine is located around 40 km from Una and is visited by a large number of people seeking a cure for those possessed by "evil spirits".

Sacred ritual

Devotees who had come to take part in the Baba Vadbhag Singh fair were taking bath in the holy spring in Charan Ganga around 5 a.m. when four or five big stones came sliding down from the mountain, the police said.

Crowded site

Bathing in 'Charan Ganga' is considered sacred. There was a lot of crowd on Monday in view of the full moon.

Seeing the stones rolling down from the mountain, people started moving helter-skelter leading to a stampede, which caused injuries to nine devotees.

All the injured were rushed to the Civil Hospital Amb for treatment, where two devotees died.

2 victims from Punjab

The deceased were identified as Billa and Balveer Chand, residents of Punjab's Faridkot, the officials added. The police sent the bodies for post-mortem examination.

Five of the injured have been sent to the Una Zonal hospital while two were referred to PGI Chandigarh.

Una Deputy Commissioner Jatin Lal said devotees would not be allowed to take bath in Charan Ganga until the situation becomes normal.

Statements of witnesses from the incident site will also be recorded, so that the real reasons for the accident can be known, said SP Una Rakesh Singh.

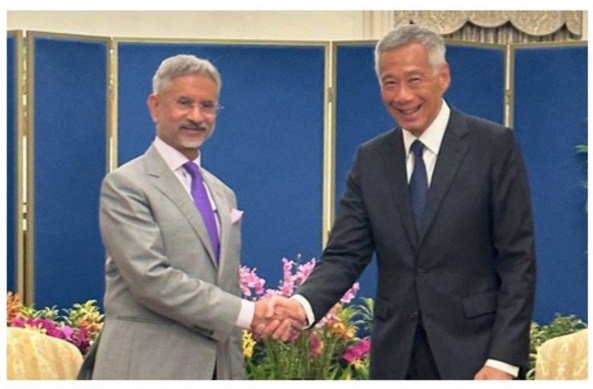
Jaishankar discusses bilateral ties with Singapore PM, senior Ministers

Press Trust of India
SINGAPORE

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Monday called on Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan, and other senior Ministers and discussed ways to further the strategic bilateral ties, and the situation in the Indo-Pacific and West Asia regions.

Mr. Jaishankar is on a three-day visit to Singapore from Saturday. He met investors on Saturday and addressed the Indian diaspora on Sunday.

"Honoured to call on Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at The Istana. Conveyed the personal greetings of PM Narendra Modi. Valued his perspectives on the current state of the world," he posted on X.



Key visit: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong during a meeting. PTI

"His positive sentiments on India-Singapore relationship have always been a source of strength for our ties," Mr. Jaishankar said about Mr. Lee's support for the bilateral relationship.

Apart from Foreign Minister Balakrishnan, Mr. Jaishankar held separate meetings with Minister of Trade and Industry Gan Kim Yong, and Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security Teo Chee Hean.

'Discussed Indo-Pacific'

He also met Finance Minister Lawrence Wong and Minister of Home Affairs and Law K. Shanmugam.

"Delighted to meet Singapore FM Vivian Bala. Reviewed the progress of our bilateral cooperation. Spoke about preparations for the next ISMR meeting. Discussed marking 60 years of our diplomatic ties," Mr. Jaishankar said.

"Exchanged views on the Indo-Pacific and West Asia," he added.

On Saturday, he told Singapore-based investors of opportunities emerging in the manufacturing sector, especially as India embarks on the journey to build a semiconductor-led industry.

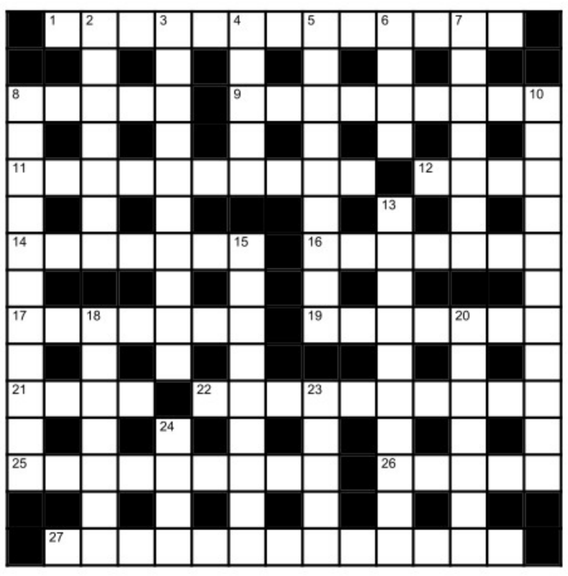
Mr. Jaishankar will also visit the Philippines and Malaysia. The March 23-27 visits will focus on enhancing bilateral relations with the three countries, and would provide an opportunity for engagement on regional issues of mutual concern, the External Affairs Ministry had said.

TH CROSSWORD + 14132

(set by Dr. X)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Alarm about atmosphere around earth in experiment (5,3,5)
8 Beer after drinking old wine (5)
9 Quashing case for abortion, zealot suppresses liberal fellows (9)
11 Film star acting sincere to cheat with lady (6,4)
12 Enthralled by revolutionary docudrama on African animal (4)
14 Score century, returning with trophy to win hearts (5,2)
16 Affected by endless pain on island in Japanese city (7)
17 Model's lively after consuming extremely fine cocaine (7)
19 Escort slyly steals posh type of diamond (4-3)
21 Superstars wanting cash at inauguration - they're never free of charge (4)
22 Recruits dedicated actors who do this? (10)
25 Pierce tin can wrongly, overwhelmed by ale perhaps (9)
26 Weepy and tired? Time for whiskey (5)
27 Self-examination in club - hourglass figure finally developed (4-9)

Down

2 Part of tuber in grotesque disease of potatoes (4,3)
3 Athlete recklessly cuddles model while driving (2,3,5)
4 Program at Italy featuring violin made by Italian family (5)
5 She essentially mentored, trained Cub Scouts (3,6)
6 Not many shrimplike creatures in stream (4)
7 Abandoned cocaine found in the sea (7)
8 Friend admits, isn't up to changes occurring after marriage (11)
10 Dish is hot, tasty - essentially mouthwatering, in other words (4,2,2,3)
13 Continuously throw up after a bite - no energy (2,1,7)
15 Ready to rant about case of open favouritism (9)
18 Encountered criminal on train (3,4)
20 Officer's ready to probe murderer (7)
23 Promise wife to cut salt, get fitter finally (5)
24 Fell from height, bedridden (4)

SUDOKU

		1			5			
						3	6	
8	4		2		6		1	
4			7		9	8	2	
				4				
	9	6	8		2			4
	5		6		7		3	8
	7	2						
			4			6		

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to previous puzzle

B	I	R	D	C	A	G	E	■	A	R	T	I	E	R
Y	■	H	■	H	■	E	■	I	■	A	■	N	■	E
P	H	O	N	E	I	N	■	T	U	N	I	S	I	A
A	■	D	■	A	■	E	■	H	■	G	■	P	■	T
T	W	E	R	P	■	R	O	O	S	E	V	E	L	T
H	■	S	■	S	■	A	■	U	■	■	■	C	■	A
■	■	■	P	H	Y	L	O	G	E	N	E	T	I	C
S	■	E	■	O	■	M	■	H	■	O	■	S	■	H
C	O	U	R	T	M	A	R	T	I	A	L	■	■	■
A	■	P	■	■	■	N	■	A	■	C	■	H	■	T
B	O	H	E	M	I	A	N	S	■	C	H	U	T	E
R	■	O	■	A	■	G	■	M	■	O	■	M	■	A
O	U	R	E	N	S	E	■	U	S	U	R	E	R	S
U	■	I	■	I	■	R	■	C	■	N	■	R	■	E
S	C	A	R	C	E	■	C	H	A	T	T	I	E	R

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

7	2	3	8	6	1	9	5	4
8	6	5	4	9	7	2	3	1
1	9	4	5	3	2	7	8	6
3	8	2	1	7	6	4	9	5
4	1	7	9	2	5	8	6	3
9	5	6	3	8	4	1	7	2
5	4	9	6	1	8	3	2	7
2	3	1	7	5	9	6	4	8
6	7	8	2	4	3	5	1	9

FAITH

Greatness of Paduka

When people start good deeds, it is customary to seek elders' permission and blessings to complete the task without any hindrance.

Navalpakkam Sri Vasudevaachariar said in a discourse that Acharya Sri Vedanta Desika showed himself as an example. The Acharya invoked the blessings of four persons before starting to write "Sri Paduka Sahasram", which glorifies the power of the divine sandals (paduka) of Lord Ranganatha.

In the first sloka, Sri Vedanta Desika invokes the blessings of great noblemen who bear on their heads the divine paduka of Sri Ranganatha, which empowers even the dust from their feet to sanctify and protect people from all inauspiciousness.

In the second sloka, the Acharya pays his homage to Bharatha who showed first to the world the greatness of paduka. He worshipped the sandals of Sri Rama, placing them on the throne and ruled the kingdom for 14 years just as a proxy to Rama. The Acharya pays his homage to Sri Nadhamunigal, who was like Bharatha to Sri Nammazhwar.

In the third verse, the Acharya pays his obeisance to Sri Nammazhwar, who bears the name of *Sataari* (paduka), being absorbed in Sri Ranganatha's feet.

INBRIEF

Boeing CEO David Calhoun to step down; Stan Deal to retire

Boeing CEO David Calhoun will step down from the embattled plane maker at the end of the year as part of a broader management shake-up after a series of mishaps at one of America's most storied manufacturers. Stan Deal, president and CEO of Boeing's commercial airplanes unit, will retire immediately, while Stephanie Pope, the chief operating officer, will lead the division. The company said board chairman Lawrence Kellner does not plan to stand for re-election in May. AP

JSL, IIT-Kharagpur partner to work on metallurgical projects

Jindal Stainless Ltd. and IIT Kharagpur will jointly work on metallurgical projects like primary alloy production and materials characterisation. It is an industry-academia collaboration, under which the premier educational institution will offer technical and operational solutions, Jindal Stainless Ltd. (JSL) said. The collaboration will work together on metallurgical projects, such as process optimisation, materials characterisation, and primary alloy production, it said. PTI

BYD rolls out 7 millionth unit of its electric vehicle in China

BYD, a leading manufacturer of electric vehicles and power batteries, on Monday, became the world's first automaker to roll out its seven millionth EV, the DENZA N7, which was unveiled at the Jinan factory in China. BYD reached the production of its 1 millionth EV in 2021 and grew threefold within 18 months, and surpassed five million units in nine months. In seven months from this mark, BYD rose to seven million, according to a press release. AP

Robusta coffee price touches all-time high amid global shortage

The price of robusta coffee has risen sharply due to a supply shortage and global factors, surpassing the price of premium arabica coffee

E.M. Manoj
KALPETTA

Prolonged scarcity: Farmers say production may decline by 25-30% next year too owing to dearth of backup showers. FILE PHOTO

Robusta coffee farmers in South India are jubilant post-harvest with their produce fetching an all-time high price.

The farmgate price of raw Robusta coffee berries touched a record ₹172 per kilogram (kg) in the Wayanad market on Saturday, as against ₹115 per kg during the same period last year. Meanwhile, the spot price of Robusta coffee beans stood at ₹315 per kg, up from ₹210 during the same period in 2023. The price was ₹80 and ₹145 per kg for raw berries and beans, respectively, in March 2022.

Though the harvest is almost complete, there has been a huge shortfall in the supply of coffee to the market this year, thereby contributing to the increase in coffee prices, said Salu George, a coffee trader in Wayanad.

Multiple factors

"We expect a decline of 30% in Robusta production this year owing to climatic vagaries, especially the scanty blossom shower in Robusta-growing regions last year," Mr. George said.

A sharp decline in the production of Robusta coffee—nearly 2 million bags—in Vietnam, a major Robusta coffee-growing country, has also led to the rise in prices, sources added. Robusta coffee production in Indonesia too dipped sharply this year, they said.

Notably, the price of Arabica seeds has dropped below the price of Robusta. The farmgate price of the Arabica variety of coffee was ₹305 per kg on Saturday. While traditionally the Arabica variety fetched a premium price, it is now Robusta that is selling at a higher price due to its low availability.

Farmers expect production to decline by 25%-30% next year too owing to a dearth of backup showers in many Robusta coffee-growing regions.

Wayanad in Kerala, which is the largest Robusta coffee-producing district in the country after Coorg in Karnataka, received a rainfall of 29.3 mm in the first week of January. Major parts of the district received no rain since then, Prasanth Rajesh, Director, Wayanad Coffee Growers' Association said.

The January showers helped in the blossoming of Robusta coffee plants, farmers say. But absence of backup showers, a major factor in the formation of berries, is a concern.

According to the Coffee Board of India, the total production of coffee in India during the 2022-23 fiscal was 3,52,000 tonnes, including 2,52,000 tonnes of Robusta coffee. The total value of India's coffee exports has risen to ₹5,279 crore during the ongoing coffee season, from ₹3,982 crore during the same period in the earlier season.

Google billing: Start-ups said to challenge CCI order

K.R. Srivats
NEW DELHI

Start-ups are set to challenge the Competition Commission of India's (CCI's) recent order denying them interim relief during the pendency of the plea challenging Google's Play Store payment policies.

The appeals are likely to be filed before the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal in the next few days, sources said.

"Despite [the] CCI finding prima facie contravention against tech giant Google, the competition watchdog had not given any interim protection to start-ups," they reasoned.

Probe against Google

The Commission had last Wednesday rejected start-ups' interim relief application for complete restraint on Google from collection of fees under tech giant's updated payments policy.

This ruling came close on the heels of the competition watchdog ordering an investigation against Google on March 15 for excessive pricing on Play Store. CCI had then held the tech giant's users choice billing (UCB) payments policy was 'prima facie' violative of the Competition Act 2002.

Shaadi.com, KukuFM and Indian Broadcasting and Digital Foundation and Indian Digital Media Industry Foundation, had urged the Commission to restrain Google from collecting any fee for transactions involving paid downloads or in-app purchases on apps offering services.

(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)

In a first, Amul to introduce fresh milk in U.S. within a week: MD Jayen Mehta

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

For the first time, Amul fresh milk will be available outside India, with the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) unveiling four variants of milk in the U.S. market within a week, to cater to the Indian diaspora and Asian populations.

"We have been exporting dairy products for many decades. This is the first time we are launching fresh milk outside India," said GCMMF MD Jayen Mehta. He said, "the GCMMF has tied up with 108-year old cooperative organisation Michigan Milk Producers Association (MMPA) to launch fresh milk in the U.S. market."

Jayen Mehta

The milk collection and processing will be done by MMPA, while GCMMF will do marketing and branding of Amul fresh milk.

"Recipe will be ours. Within one week, Amul Taaza, Amul Gold, Amul Shakti and Amul Slim n Trim will be available in the U.S. market," he said.

Mr. Mehta said fresh milk will be available in New York, New Jersey, Chicago, Washington, Dallas and Texas among others.

He said GCMMF would also introduce products like paneer and curd soon.

Switch Mobility to roll out maiden electric LCV soon

N. Anand
CHENNAI

Switch Mobility Ltd. is gearing up to roll out its maiden product in the e-Light Commercial Vehicle (eLCV) segment in the next few days and the second in the next three months, a top company executive said.

Mahesh Babu

"We are going to roll out IeV4 (Intelligent EV) this week from the Hosur plant, while it will take about three months for IeV3's roll out," CEO Mahesh Babu said during an interaction.

"FAME-II comes to an end by March 2024. It does not offer subsidy for LCVs. As the buyer has to pay more, we are offering them discounts. However, the savings per month would be in the region of ₹6,000-9,000 depending on the number of kilometres travelled," he said.

Switch Mobility had unveiled eLCVs (small trucks) IeV3 and IeV4 during Ashok Leyland's 75th Anniversary celebrations, and said it had secured pre-bookings for 13,000 units.

The target customers included e-commerce platforms and the FMCG segment.

Before this, the EV arm of Ashok Leyland, had made its presence felt in the e-bus segment by unveiling the double decker EiV12 in two variants (low floor and standard).

On Monday, Switch Mobility rolled out five units of EiV9 to IIT-Madras for in-campus mobility.

"Today is a momentous occasion for us as we reveal the next chapter in sustainable mobility with the roll-out of e-buses for IIT-Madras," Mr. Babu said.

With regard to EiV12, he said the company had secured orders for 1,300 buses to be executed within a year for various State Transport Corporations.

Manipal's Pai eyes Byju's 42% stake in Aakash

Hamsini Karthik
Jyoti Banthia
MUMBAI/BENGALURU

Months after taking 40% stake in Bjyu's-owned Aakash Educational Services, Ranjan Pai, Chairman of Manipal Education and Medical Group, is said to be readying for a larger stake in the company.

Sources said Mr. Pai is eyeing the 42% stake held by Byju Raveendran and Byju's parent company Think and Learn. He is said to have offered to acquire the stake at Aakash's valuation of $700-800 million. However, a Byju's spokesperson denied the move.

(The writers are with The Hindu businessline)

'India Yamaha Motor aims to capture 10% market share by CY27'

N. Anand
CHENNAI

Japanese two-wheeler maker India Yamaha Motor Pvt. Ltd. (IYM) has chalked out a mid-term plan (MTP) to more than double its overall market share in India to 10% by CY27, said a senior company executive.

New products

"We will be announcing the MTP for 2025-27 soon. The MTP calls for increasing the market share from 3.8% to 10%, chalking out a plan for setting up a new factory, and a road map for unveiling new products," Yamaha Motor India's Senior Vice President Sales and Marketing Ravinder Singh told *The Hindu*.

Ravinder Singh

"This we will try to achieve by rolling out motorbikes with higher capacities, targeting first-time buyers, and young buyers from urban and semi-urban areas, who want performance oriented and aspirational products, and by entering Tier-2 and 3 cities," Mr. Singh said.

The company produces 125cc and 155cc scooters (Fascino, Ray and Aerox) and premium segment motorbikes of 155cc and 321cc range. It commands a market share of 15% each.

Industry growth

Last year, the industry grew by 8%, while IYM grew by 15%, he said.

India Yamaha Motor has plants in Chennai and Surajpur with a combined production capacity 1.5 million units for scooters and motorbikes. Last year, the company sold 8.6 lakh units, of which 2.1 lakh units were exported.

This year, IYM aims to sell one million units that includes exports of 2.5 lakh units. On exports, he said scooters and motorbikes were being shipped to South American, African and South Asian countries. During the current year, IYM will be shipping scooters to Europe and Japan as well.

Asserting that the company was planning to step up its offerings, he said, "We no longer produce 100cc scooters. Currently, we are producing scooters of 125cc and 155cc and motorbikes of 149cc, 155cc and 321cc." "We are also planning to roll out higher range of motorbikes that are running in different countries," Mr. Singh said.

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GAZA STRIP

Israel-Hamas battles rage around major Gaza hospitals, raising fears

AFP

Israeli forces fought Hamas militants in besieged Gaza on Monday including around at least two major hospitals, raising fears for the patients, medics, and displaced people trapped inside. Troops and tanks have encircled Gaza City's Al-Shifa Hospital for a week and more recently moved on the Al-Amal Hospital. AFP

YANGON

Myanmar election may not be held nationwide, says junta chief

REUTERS

Myanmar may not be able to hold its next election nationwide, the country's junta chief Min Aung Hlaing said on Monday, as the military struggles to contain escalating violence against its rule. He said officials are currently focusing on verifying voter lists, reiterating that polls could only come once peace is restored. AFP

LONDON

U.S., U.K. announce sanctions over China-linked hacks on lawmakers

AFP

The U.S. and British governments on Monday announced sanctions against a company and two people linked to the Chinese government over malicious cyber activity targeting the U.K.'s election watchdog and lawmakers in both countries. British authorities did not name the company or the two individuals. AP

BEIJING

Sri Lankan Prime Minister arrives in China for state visit

REUTERS

Sri Lankan Prime Minister Dinesh Gunawardena arrived in China Monday for a visit during which he will meet President Xi Jinping and is expected to discuss restructuring Colombo's vast debts. Mr. Gunawardena will also attend the Boao Forum, a high-profile international meeting on the island province of Hainan. AFP

For the IS, Russia is an enemy that destroyed its plans in Syria

In recent years, the IS has released several propaganda videos, saying Russians had 'the blood of Muslims on their hands' in Afghanistan, Chechnya, and Syria; the group uses these videos to radicalise and recruit youth in Central Asian countries

NEWS ANALYSIS

Stanly Johny

Burnt out: The Crocus City Hall concert venue in Krasnogorsk which was attacked by the Islamic State jihadists. AFP

In the 1990s and early 2000s, Russia witnessed a series of terror attacks, mostly by Chechen militants. One of the early promises of Vladimir Putin, who rose to power in the late 1990s, was that he would crush the terrorists and restore order.

For many Russians, the Crocus City Hall shooting of March 22 in the outskirts if Moscow, in which at least 137 people were killed, brought back memories of the period of terror. Russia claimed long ago that Chechen separatism was crushed. But today, it's facing a new jihadist threat – the Islamic State, which has claimed responsibility for the Concert Hall attack.

According to western intelligence, the Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K), the Afghanistan-based arm of the Sunni terrorist group, is behind the Moscow attack. Russian authorities have charged four Tajik nationals for the attack.

After the physical caliphate of the IS in Syria and Iraq was destroyed in 2015-18, several trained IS jihadists moved to Afghanistan, where they set up an operational base. Ever since the Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan in August 2021, the IS-K has carried out a number of attacks. In the Islamic State's lexicon, the IS-Khorasan is a *wilayat*, a province that covers the geographical area of Afghanistan and the Central Asian Republics.

After Friday's attack in Moscow, the IS claimed that it was part of "a wider war between the Islamic State and countries fighting Islam".

Syrian intervention

The IS sees Russia as a key enemy because the Russian intervention in Syria in 2015 was one of the pivotal factors that turned the Syrian civil war in favour of the regime of President Bashar al-Assad. In 2017, when the IS seized the Syrian city of Palmyra, Russia's Wagner, along with Syrian troops, liberated the city.

The IS was founded in the midst of the Syrian civil war in 2014, and one of the early cities it captured was Raaqa in eastern Syria. It wanted to topple President Assad and capture Damascus, the seat of power of the Umayyad Caliphate. That never materialised.

Today, Russia also supports regimes in West Africa such as Mali, which are fighting different jihadist groups, including an affiliate of the IS. In recent months, the IS had released anti-Russia propaganda videos, claiming that Russians had "blood of Muslims on their hands" in Afghanistan, Chechnya, and Syria, referring to the past Russian interventions. The IS-Khorasan is largely made up of militants from Central Asian Republics.

The IS-K uses these videos to recruit radicalised Central Asian youths into its terror cells. Russia hosts hundreds of thousands of Central Asian labourers, who are targeted by the IS's propaganda blitz.

In recent years the IS-K has emerged as the most powerful branch of the IS networks. Chaos in West Asia, a base in Afghanistan and foot soldiers from Central Asia are all helping the group expand its activities. Iran was attacked in January; Russia last week, any other country in Eurasia could be the next.

Four suspected attackers of Moscow concert hall held in custody over 'terror' charges

Agence France-Presse
MOSCOW

Suspected attackers of a Moscow concert hall who were held in custody are seen with bruises and cuts over their faces. AFP

Russia has ordered four men accused of killing at least 137 people in a massacre at a Moscow concert hall to be held in custody on "terror" charges with the death toll expected to climb as more than 100 people are hospitalised.

The men face life in prison, although Russian officials have clamoured for the lifting of a moratorium on the death penalty to deliver even harsher sentences.

In a series of late-night court hearings in Moscow that ran into the early hours of Monday, the four men – with bruises and cuts over their faces – were dragged into the court in front of dozens of reporters who had assembled at the capital's Basmanny district court.

FSB security service officers wheeled one in to the hearing on a medical gurney, following reports and videos on Russian social media of bloody interrogations after the men were arrested on Saturday.

The Friday evening attack has been claimed by Islamic State, though Russian officials have not commented on their possible involvement. Gunmen in camouflage stormed the Crocus City Hall concert venue on Friday night, shooting concert-goers before setting the building ablaze and fleeing the scene, Russian investigators say.

More than 5,000 people were in the building, Russian state media cited a spokesperson from the venue owner as saying Monday.

The Moscow court ordered the men to be held in pre-trial detention until May 22 – a date that is likely to be extended until a full trial.

Russia said on Saturday it had arrested 11 people in connection with the attack. There has been no information on the other seven. The four suspected shooters were all citizens of Tajikistan, Russian state media reported.

Philippines lodges protest against China

Associated Press
MANILA

The Philippines lodged its "strongest protest" against Beijing on Monday and summoned a senior Chinese diplomat over a water cannon assault by the Chinese coast guard that injured Filipino navy crew members and heavily damaged their boat in the disputed South China Sea, officials said.

In response, China warned that relations were at a crossroads and the Philippines should choose a prudent path forward.

Two Chinese coast guard ships hit a Philippine navy-operated supply boat with water cannons Saturday in the latest and most serious confrontation between the rival Asian claimants near the disputed Second Thomas Shoal, which is surrounded by Chinese vessels in a bid to dislodge Philippine forces from there.

The repeated high-seas confrontations since last year have sparked fears of a larger conflict that could put China and the United States on a collision course.

The U.S. has warned repeatedly that it's obligated to defend the Philippines – its oldest treaty ally in Asia – if Filipino forces, ships, or aircraft come under an armed attack, including in the South China Sea.

The United States, the European Union, Japan, Australia, and about 16 other countries have expressed support to the Philippines and the rule of law, according to the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila.

China accused Philippine vessels of "intruding" into Chinese waters.

Pakistani trade delegation visits Kabul

Associated Press
ISLAMABAD

A delegation from Pakistan's Ministry of Commerce arrived in Kabul on Monday to meet its Afghan counterparts to discuss how to improve trade relations, after tensions have risen over cross-border militant attacks.

Last week, Pakistan's military carried out rare airstrikes against suspected hideouts of the Pakistani Taliban inside Afghanistan, killing eight people and prompting Afghan forces to return fire.

Might ease tensions

The March 18 exchange came after seven Pakistani soldiers were killed in a suicide bombing and coordinated attack in northwest Pakistan. It had further strained ties between the sides, and officials believe that Monday's visit by a senior bureaucrat, Mohammad Khurram, will play a role in easing tensions.

In Kabul, Abdul Salam Jawad, spokesman for the Afghan Commerce Ministry, said that the Pakistani delegation had arrived at the invitation of Afghan Minister of Industry and Commerce Nooruddin Azizi. Pakistan's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, said the visit was aimed at promoting trade and people-to-people ties with Afghanistan.

Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have been strained in recent years mainly because of Kabul's backing for the Pakistani Taliban, who are known as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan or TTP, and are a separate organization from the Afghan Taliban.

Sport

Desperate India up against a rejuvenated Afghanistan

FIFA WC QUALIFIER

Amitabha Das Sharma
GUWAHATI

Getting into rhythm: The Indian players go through their drill in Guwahati on Monday. RITU RAJ KONWAR

India sought to infuse vibrant hues to its 2026 FIFA World Cup qualification campaign where it faces a rejuvenated Afghanistan in a second-round match of Group A, at the Indira Gandhi Athletic Stadium, here on Tuesday.

The Holi celebrations provided the perfect ambience for the Indian squad to renew its promises for a better result after having played out a drab goalless draw against the same opponent while visiting its makeshift home in Saudi Arabian city of Abha barely four days ago.

The match here assumes importance for India which is looking to make it to the next stage (round three) of the World Cup qualifiers – which also doubles up as the qualification round for the final stage of the 2027 Asian Cup – for the first time.

Indian head coach Igor Stimac has asserted that he would be quitting his post if the country fails to progress in the qualification process. Stimac, who has a contract as the Indian head coach till 2026, believes that the team can advance to the next stage if it delivers to its potential.

A win against Afghanistan at home will consolidate India's position in the second spot where it currently lies after three rounds with four points in its kitty. Two teams will progress from each group in the current second round engagements.

India began its campaign with a lot of promise as it beat Kuwait 1-0 away on Nov. 16, 2023. It lost to the current group leader and Asian Champion Qatar 0-3 (on Nov. 21, Bhubaneswar) before picking up another point against Afghanistan in its second away game at Abha.

Chhetri, who will be earning a historic 150th cap in India colours, wished that his team makes it memorable with a win against Afghanistan.

Everyone should help as we are on the verge of making history: Stimac

Amitabha Das Sharma
GUWAHATI

Stimac. RITU RAJ KONWAR

Looking to give credence to the developmental work happening around Indian football over the last few years, the senior men's team head coach Igor Stimac said the National team should make it to the third round of the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers to prove its evolving status as a strong footballing nation.

"I have proven time and again that our team works perfectly well if we have enough time to work together. We are on the verge of making history in Indian football (by making it to the third round) and would urge every stakeholder of Indian football to help us in achieving that and not create barricades in on the way to our success," Stimac said.

"We are stuck somewhere in our mind where we are not trying enough and that's something which hurts me as a coach. We need to get the stability back in the team and see it perform with more confidence," he added.

"We are looking for players to provide stability in ball control and passing control. You see Anwar (Ali) and Jeakson (Singh) are still not at their best of ability and that is causing problems in the area of ball control.

"We are also not getting much from our full backs as we need them to work with more confidence.

"The scoring problem has been haunting us for five years and even before I took charge here. This is a problem with the leagues and competitions in the domestic format where foreign players occupy the important positions in the club sides.

"We are creating chances and but getting the goals is something which the players need to execute," he said.

DIFFERENT CENTURY

Kohli becomes the first Indian to register 100 50+ scores in T20s

K. MURALI KUMAR

Virat Kohli registered his 100th T20 fifty-plus score on Monday, becoming the first Indian and overall only third player to do so, when he scored 77. West Indies' Chris Gayle (110 fifty-plus scores) and Australia's David Warner (109 fifty-plus scores) are the other two batters to reach the landmark.

BRAVE PLOY

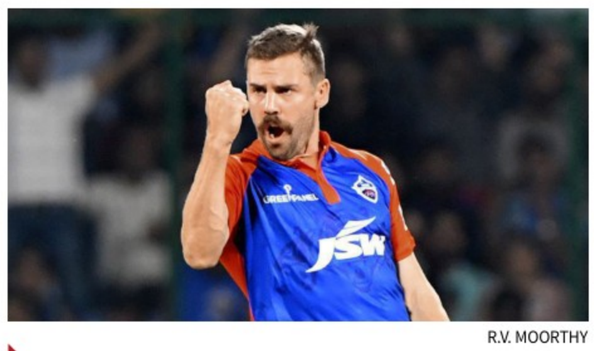
Attacking bowling did the trick, says Titans spinner Sai Kishore

SPORTZPICS/IPL

Titans' left-arm spinner Sai Kishore said it was a bespoke bowling approach that brought success against Mumbai Indians on Sunday. "Because the wicket was a bit two-paced, we did not directly go for yorkers at the death. That resulted in us getting a lot of wickets. It was attacking bowling even when match situation was otherwise."

EXCITING NEWS

Proteas pacer Anrich Nortje joins Delhi Capitals squad



R.V. MOORTHY

Star South African pacer Anrich Nortje on Monday joined the Delhi Capitals (DC) squad for the IPL. The official X handle of the Delhi-based franchise shared a small glimpse of the 30-year-old joining the team. "Everything moved a little Nortje today," Delhi Capitals posted on X.

BACKING CLASS

Fleming says he does not have concerns over Rahane's form

B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Chennai Super Kings coach Stephen Fleming was quick to dismiss the question on whether he had any concerns over Ajinkya Rahane's form in the run up to the Indian Premier League. "No, I love him. He's brilliant," Fleming said on Monday, on the eve of CSK's match against Gujarat Titans.

Pristine Kohli and dashing Karthik give RCB hard-earned win over PBKS

The Punjab side loses steam to finish with a modest total as the Royal Challengers bowlers strike regularly; Lomror, too, makes an impact in the chase

Rapturous start, thunderous finish: After Kohli provided the impetus at the top of the order, Karthik's big-hitting sealed the deal for RCB. K. MURALI KUMAR

IPL-17

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) held its nerve to record a four-wicket victory over Punjab Kings in their IPL encounter at M. Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Monday.

RCB had bumps along the road in pursuit of a par 177-run target. The chase was shepherded by Virat Kohli, who made a busy 49-ball 77 with 11 fours and two sixes. But when the star batter was dismissed by RCB old boy Harshal Patel, the home team was left with 47 runs to get in four overs.

Impact Player Mahipal Lomror (17 n.o., 8b, 2x4, 1x6) and seasoned campaigner Dinesh Karthik (28 n.o., 10b, 3x4, 2x6) were up to the task, while PBKS speedsters Harshal, Sam Curran and Arshdeep Singh wilted under the pressure. RCB reached the finish line with four balls to spare when Karthik spanked Arshdeep for a six and a straight four.

The packed house was loudest when Kohli was on song. He was lucky to earn a reprieve when Jonny Bairstow dropped a catch at slip off just the second ball of the innings. Kohli was in terrific touch, smashing good deliveries on the up over cover. Kohli fell at a crucial juncture, leading to worried faces in the RCB camp.

Lomror and Karthik, however, ensured that RCB recorded its first win of the tournament.

After being put in, Punjab Kings (PBKS) stuttered in the face of a disciplined RCB attack. Pacer Yash Dayal (1/23) was impressive, hitting the right length and getting movement both ways.

The PBKS top-order had no answer to the consistent Dayal, with skipper Shikhar Dhawan even shouldering arms to the first three deliveries he faced.

Bairstow tried to compensate for the slow approach by taking on Mohammed Siraj, only to sky a pull to Kohli inside the circle. Next man Prabhsimran Singh punished anything on the pads. Off-spinner Glenn Maxwell stayed well away from this strength, getting Prabhsimran tied up with a quicker one which reared from length.

Liam Livingstone was sent in to hike the run rate. The gamble did not pay off, as Livingstone nicked a rising express ball from Alzarri Joseph to the 'keeper.

Dhawan continued to bat cautiously, finally lobbing one from Maxwell to long-off. Sam Curran put on 52 runs for the fifth wicket with Jitesh Sharma (27, 20b, 1x4, 2x6).

Rawat capped a memorable night with the gloves when he leapt in the air and plucked a one-handed catch to dismiss Curran. Shashank Singh (21 n.o., 8b, 1x4, 2x6) provided the much-needed spark towards the end of the PBKS essay.

SCOREBOARD

PUNJAB KINGS

Shikhar Dhawan c Kohli b Maxwell 45 *(37b, 5x4, 1x6)*, Jonny Bairstow c Kohli b Siraj 8 *(6b, 2x4)*, Prabhsimran Singh c Rawat b Maxwell 25 *(17b, 2x4, 2x6)*, Liam Livingstone c Rawat b Joseph 17 *(13b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Sam Curran c Rawat b Dayal 23 *(17b, 3x4)*, Jitesh Sharma c Rawat b Siraj 27 *(20b, 1x4, 2x6)*, Shashank Singh (not out) 21 *(8b, 1x4, 2x6)*, Harpreet Brar (not out) 2 *(2b)*; Extras (b-1, lb-1, w-6): 8; Total (for six wkts, in 20 overs): 176.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-17 (Bairstow, 2.3 overs), 2-72 (Prabhsimran, 8.5), 3-98 (Livingstone, 11.6), 4-98 (Dhawan, 12.1), 5-150 (Curran, 17.5), 6-154 (Jitesh, 18.4).

RCB BOWLING

Siraj 4-0-26-2, Dayal 4-0-23-1, Joseph 4-0-43-1, Green 2-0-19-0, Dagar 3-0-34-0, Maxwell 3-0-29-2.

ROYAL CHALLENGERS

Virat Kohli c Brar b Harshal 77 *(49b, 11x4, 2x6)*, Faf du Plessis c Curran b Rabada 3 *(7b)*, Cameron Green c Jitesh b Rabada 3 *(5b)*, Rajat Patidar b Brar 18 *(18b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Glenn Maxwell b Brar 3 *(5b)*, Anuj Rawat lbw b Curran 11 *(14b, 1x4)*, Dinesh Karthik (not out) 28 *(10b, 3x4, 2x6)*, Mahipal Lomror (**Impact Player in place of Dayal**) (not out) 17 *(8b, 2x4, 1x6)*; Extras (b-2, lb-9, w-7): 18; Total (for six wkts. in 19.2 overs): 178.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-26 (du Plessis, 2.4), 2-43 (Green, 4.4), 3-86 (Patidar, 10.3), 4-103 (Maxwell, 12.1), 5-130 (Kohli, 15.6), 6-130 (Rawat, 16.2).

PUNJAB KINGS BOWLING

Curran 3-0-30-1, Arshdeep (**Impact Player in place of Prabhsimran**) 3.2-0-40-0, Rabada 4-0-23-2, Brar 4-0-13-2, Harshal 4-0-45-1, Rahul Chahar 1-0-16-0.

Toss: RCB.

PoM: Kohli.

RCB won by four wickets with four balls to spare.

Next assignment

RCB: March 29 vs. **KKR**
Bengaluru, 7.30 p.m.

PBKS: March 30 vs. **LSG**
Lucknow, 7.30 p.m.

Battlelines drawn as last year's finalists CSK and GT face off

Familiar territory: Sai Sudharsan, left, and Sai Kishore's, right, knowledge of the conditions at Chepauk could come in handy for the Titans. S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

The last time Chennai Super Kings and Gujarat Titans met, it was one of the best matches of the IPL in a thrilling final last year in Ahmedabad, where the former triumphed.

On Tuesday, the battlelines will be drawn again when last year's finalists face off in their second league match here at the MAC Stadium. Both teams started their 2024 campaign on a winning note under new captains and will look to build some early momentum. CSK was clinical in dispatching Royal Challengers Bengaluru and, with its explosive batting line-up, the hosts will feel it has a slight edge. In contrast, Titans had to work harder against Mumbai Indians to post a six-run win on Sunday.

Despite the easy six-wicket win against RCB, the five-time champion will now want to fix the flaws from the first game. Death bowling will be one area, as CSK conceded 71 in the last five overs.

Visiting teams often struggle on the slow surfaces at Chepauk against the Super Kings' quality spin attack, and how well the Titans' batters ace that challenge could have a say in the outcome of the game. Against Mumbai, the Gujarat batters left runs on the table, and they will want to put in more effort.

But on the bowling front, both teams are evenly matched. The Titans have an equally good spin attack led by Rashid Khan and local lad R. Sai Kishore. More importantly, Gujarat has as many as five Tamil Nadu players in its line-up, and their knowledge of the conditions could come in handy.

Today's match

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS vs. GUJARAT TITANS

Chennai, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD
PLAYED: 5
CSK 2 | GT 3

PREVIOUS MEETING
CSK won by five wickets (DLS Method), 2023 final

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIO CINEMA

IPL 2024 schedule

The fixtures for the remainder of IPL-17 were drawn up on Monday, following the initial set of matches (till April 7) announced earlier

Date	Teams	Time	Venue
April 8	CSK vs. KKR	7.30 p.m.	Chennai
April 9	PBKS vs. SRH	7.30 p.m.	Mullanpur
April 10	RR vs. GT	7.30 p.m.	Jaipur
April 11	MI vs. RCB	7.30 p.m.	Mumbai
April 12	LSG vs. DC	7.30 p.m.	Lucknow
April 13	PBKS vs. RR	7.30 p.m.	Mullanpur
April 14	KKR vs. LSG	3.30 p.m.	Kolkata
April 14	MI vs. CSK	7.30 p.m.	Mumbai
April 15	RCB vs. SRH	7.30 p.m.	Bengaluru
April 16	GT vs. DC	7.30 p.m.	Ahmedabad
April 17	KKR vs. RR	7.30 p.m.	Kolkata
April 18	PBKS vs. MI	7.30 p.m.	Mullanpur
April 19	LSG vs. CSK	7.30 p.m.	Lucknow
April 20	DC vs. SRH	7.30 p.m.	Delhi
April 21	KKR vs. RCB	3.30 p.m.	Kolkata
April 21	PBKS vs. GT	7.30 p.m.	Mullanpur
April 22	RR vs. MI	7.30 p.m.	Jaipur
April 23	CSK vs. LSG	7.30 p.m.	Chennai
April 24	DC vs. GT	7.30 p.m.	Delhi
April 25	SRH vs. RCB	7.30 p.m.	Hyderabad
April 26	KKR vs. PBKS	7.30 p.m.	Kolkata
April 27	DC vs. MI	3.30 p.m.	Delhi
April 27	LSG vs. RR	7.30 p.m.	Lucknow
April 28	GT vs. RCB	3.30 p.m.	Ahmedabad
April 28	CSK vs. SRH	7.30 p.m	Chennai
April 29	KKR vs. DC	7.30 p.m	Kolkata
April 30	LSG vs. MI	7.30 p.m	Lucknow
May 1	CSK vs. PBKS	7.30 p.m.	Chennai
May 2	SRH vs. RR	7.30 p.m.	Hyderabad
May 3	MI vs. KKR	7.30 p.m	Mumbai
May 4	RCB vs. GT	7.30 p.m.	Bengaluru
May 5	PBKS vs. CSK	3.30 p.m.	Dharamshala
May 5	LSG vs. KKR	7.30 p.m.	Lucknow
May 6	MI vs. SRH	7.30 p.m.	Mumbai
May 7	DC vs. RR	7.30 p.m.	Delhi
May 8	SRH vs. LSG	7.30 p.m.	Hyderabad
May 9	PBKS vs. RCB	7.30 p.m	Dharamshala
May 10	GT vs. CSK	7.30 p.m.	Ahmedabad
May 11	KKR vs. MI	7.30 p.m.	Kolkata
May 12	CSK vs. RR	3.30 p.m.	Chennai
May 12	RCB vs. DC	7.30 p.m.	Bengaluru
May 13	GT vs. KKR	7.30 p.m.	Ahmedabad
May 14	DC vs. LSG	7.30 p.m.	Delhi
May 15	RR vs. PBKS	7.30 p.m.	Guwahati
May 16	SRH vs. GT	7.30 p.m.	Hyderabad
May 17	MI vs. LSG	7.30 p.m.	Mumbai
May 18	RCB vs. CSK	7.30 p.m.	Bengaluru
May 19	SRH vs. PBKS	3.30 p.m.	Hyderabad
May 19	RR vs. KKR	7.30 p.m.	Guwahati
PLAYOFFS			
May 21	Qualifier 1	7.30 p.m.	Ahmedabad
May 22	Eliminator	7.30 p.m.	Ahmedabad
May 24	Qualifier 2	7.30 p.m.	Chennai
May 26	Final	7.30 p.m.	Chennai

To have everybody contribute is a positive, says coach Fleming

Sankar Narayanan E.H.
CHENNAI

Chennai Super Kings chased down Royal Challengers Bengaluru's 173 with none of its batters crossing even 40 in the IPL 2024 season opener.

CSK coach Stephen Fleming said he was not worried about no one batting right through the innings as long as the job was done.

"You don't always get it with one big score. So, to have everybody contribute is a positive as well. Yes, games are easier if one player gets a 75-plus score. That's the aim, but it does not always happen," said Fleming on the eve of the fixture against Gujarat Titans.

There is no 'designated' aggressive opener between Ruturaj Gaikwad and Rachin Ravindra, revealed Fleming.

"No, it's not defined like that. One day a player will get away better than another. Rachin was nice and positive the other day. It could be Ruturaj or even another opening combination on Tuesday."

Strong intent

When asked if it's the Impact Player rule or the intent that is behind the team's attacking approach, Fleming said: "From our point of view, it's probably the intent. In the years we don't do well, we look at why and we rectify that. And one of the changes was very strong intent."

Fleming confirmed that Sri Lanka pacer Matheesha Pathirana was available for selection.

Big picture: Though none of the Super Kings batters crossed 40 in the chase against RCB, Dhoni didn't get an opportunity to show his skills as a finisher. S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

INBRIEF

Rajitha bowls Sri Lanka to a crushing victory

Kasun Rajitha claimed his second five-wicket haul in Test cricket as Sri Lanka crushed Bangladesh by 328 runs on Monday in Sylhet to go 1-0 up in the two-match series. The visitors bowled out Bangladesh for 182 in its second innings after lunch on the fourth day, with pacer Rajitha recording figures of five for 56. Overnight batter Mominul Haque scored an unbeaten 87 for the host. The second and final match of the series will be played in Chittagong from March 30.

The scores: Sri Lanka 280 & 418 bt Bangladesh 188 & 182 (Momninul 87 n.o., Miraz 33, Fernando 3/36, Rajitha 5/56).

Lin and Marin take the honours at the Swiss Open

Taiwan's Lin Chun-Yi and Spain's Carolina Marin won the men's and women's singles crowns respectively at the Swiss Open Super 300 badminton in Basel on Sunday. While Lin beat compatriot Chou Tien-chen 7-21, 22-20, 23-21, Marin downed Indonesia's Gregoria Mariska Tunjung 21-19, 13-21, 22-20 in the summit clashes.

USA downs Mexico, clinches CONCACAF Nations League title

Gio Reyna and Tyler Adams scored to give USA a 2-0 win over Mexico in Sunday's CONCACAF Nations League final in Dallas, giving the Americans all three titles in the event's history. Adams netted a long-distance effort in the 45th minute and Reyna directed a loose ball in the box into the goal in the 63rd for USA, which also won Nations League crowns in 2021 and 2023.

Nelly Korda grabs another LPGA playoff win

Nelly Korda drilled a birdie putt at the first playoff hole to beat Ryann O'Toole in the LPGA Seri Pak golf Championship in Los Angeles, where her second title in as many starts secured her return to the world No. 1 spot. After shaking off some rust early in the week, she battled through the "brutal" windy conditions to claim the 10th LPGA title of her career. Nelly led by three after an eagle at the 14th but closed with back-to-back bogeys in a two-under par 69 to fall into a tie on nine-under par 275 with fellow American O'Toole, who had five-under 66.

Sai Kishore shines under Rashid's shadow, ready to rock this season

Gujarat Titans' left-arm spinner bowled four uninterrupted overs against Mumbai Indians, gave away a miserly 24 runs and picked up the prized wicket of Rohit; the 27-year-old's mastery of the dewy conditions stood out

IPL-17

N. Sudarshan
AHMEDABAD

In 2023, R. Sai Kishore did not play a single IPL match for Gujarat Titans. Going by his performance in Sunday's six-run win over Mumbai Indians, he is set to play more than a handful this season.

The left-arm spinner bowled four uninterrupted overs for a miserly 24 runs, and picked up the prized wicket of Rohit Sharma that triggered MI's collapse. That the effort came despite the presence of dew made it all the more praiseworthy.

"I was expecting dew to play a major role," Sai Kishore said after the win. "The ball was wet but for some strange reason it was still holding on to the wicket. I was surprised by the amount of purchase I was getting. So I just tried to mix my pace and go slow through the air."

Key player: Sai Kishore, second from right, is expected to play a bigger role for Titans in this edition.
VIJAY SONEJI

The chance to bowl his full quota of overs at one go helped, Sai Kishore said.

"When you bowl four on the trot, it is easier and you can be in rhythm for a lot longer. When you look at Syed Mushtaq Ali [Trophy] or TNPL, it goes 1-1-1-1 for me. That is how I use my overs."

"With the Impact Player rule, we are playing with six bowlers, and with the amount of quality we have, I am getting to bowl those four [overs on the trot] which I am enjoying."

Curiously, it may well be Hardik Pandya's exit from GT that paves the way for a more consistent run for Sai Kishore in the team. There is little doubt that the Tamil Nadu skipper would have even otherwise staked claim, having finished with 53 wickets in the Ranji Trophy.

But with Afghan Azmatullah Omarzai being looked at as Hardik's replacement, and Rashid Khan and South Africa's David Miller certainties in the side, the bowling will need to be India heavy. Even as Rashid remains the principal threat, Sai Kishore can emerge as the ghost in the ring.

"In the other teams that I play, I usually do the lead role. To do the second role is actually exciting," Sai Kishore stated. "Most teams will just play out Rashid and they are going to come after me. That is going to make things exciting. We haven't spoken in detail about how to go about bowling together but that sync is [already] there."

Border-Gavaskar Trophy extended to five Tests

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The latest edition of the marquee Border-Gavaskar Trophy was on Monday extended by a match with India and Australia set to play five Tests later this year for the first time since the 1991-92 season, announced Cricket Australia (CA). The full schedule for the 2024-25 series is set to be released in the coming days.

"For the first time since 1991-92, Australia and India will compete across a five-Test series this summer. The extended series for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy will be a headline of the 2024-25 home schedule set to be released in the coming days," CA posted on X.

The BCCI and CA jointly announced the development. "The BCCI remains steadfast in its dedication to preserving the rich heritage of Test Cricket, a format we hold in the highest esteem," BCCI secretary Jay Shah said in a release.

"Our ongoing collaboration with Cricket Australia in extending the Border-Gavaskar Trophy to five Tests underscores our collective commitment to nurturing and elevating Test cricket's significance. This extension echoes our shared vision to amplify the essence of Test cricket and uphold its legacy."

In the past four series between the two teams, India have won on all four occasions, including back-to-back away Test series wins in 2018-19 and 2020-21. However, Pat Cummins and Co. defeated India in the World Test Championship final in London last year.

Perth is set to host the opening Test of the five-match series this year. CA is yet to come out with the final schedule but the series is likely to start in late November this year.

"We are delighted the Border-Gavaskar Trophy has been extended to five Tests given the intense rivalry between our two great cricketing nations and the excitement this creates," CA Chairman Mike Baird said.

BENGALURU ROUND-UP

Nitish nets twice

Nitish Kumar scored two goals as BM FC blanked Noel Wilson 4-0 in the KSFA C-division league championship on Monday.

The results: La Esperanza 2 (Martin Stephen 9, D. Patrick 40) bt Kodagu Colts 1 (Yejnten Gyatso Sherpa 38); Bengaluru Champs Academy 2 (P.C. Vijeesh 7, P. Rakesh 30) bt Blues FA 0; Rush FC 2 (P. Arjun 2, Akash 56) bt Pioneers FC 1 (Shamil 26); BM FC 4 (Sham 25, S.K. Nitish Kumar 45, 60, Sathish 60) bt Noel Wilson 0.

Hat-trick by Sushesh

K. Sushesh scored a hat-trick as Snipers FC thrashed Royals FC 6-0 in the BDFA C-division league championship on Monday.

The results: B-div: Vijayanagara FC 4 (Jangjiagin Kuki 17, 37, Jeet Dome 24, Seigoulen Kipgen 52) bt MD Sporting FC 0; Snipers FC 6 (V.P. Shahil 23, 43, K. Sushesh 28, 56, 68, J. Sainaga Subramaniya 67) bt Royals FC 0; Postal Dept FC 2 (H. Subba 35, S. Dhanush 68) bt South India FC 1 (Lakshmikant Bellur Srinivas 70).
C-div: Miska United FC 2 (Rafsad 5, Jaishad 24) bt Indiranagara FC 1 (Md. Shameem 11); JP Sports FC 7 (Luke 3, 38, Bharathi 30, 32, Prabhu 30, 47, Dhanush 43) bt ECD FC 1 (Pavan Raj 60).

LIVE TELECAST

NBA: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 7.30 a.m.
Football: WC 2026 Qualifier, India vs Afghanistan, DD Sports & FanCode, 7 p.m.
IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 7.30 p.m.

Sreeja. FILE PHOTO

Sreeja clinches WTT Feeder Beirut title

Press Trust of India
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Indian paddler Sreeja Akula clinched the women's singles title while Manav Thakar and Manush Shah reigned supreme in the men's doubles event at the WTT Feeder Beirut II in Beirut, Lebonan.

World No. 47 Indian pulled off a 6-11, 12-10, 11-5 11-9 win over the lower-ranked Sarah D. Nutte of Luxembourg for her second WTT singles career title after the Feeder Corpus Christi triumph in January.

However, Sreeja couldn't make it twin victories as she lost in the women's doubles final.

Partnering Diya Chitale, the Indian duo went down 4-11, 11-9, 11-7, 11-6 to Doo Hoi Kem and Zhu Chengzhu of Hong Kong.

In the men's doubles summit clash, which was an all Indian affair, Manav and Manush defeated compatriots Mudit Dani and Akash Pal 11-7, 11-5, 9-11, 11-6.

Poymantee Baisya and Akash Pal upset the experienced duo of G. Sathiyan and Manika Batra 11-9, 7-11, 11-9, 11-0 to win their maiden mixed doubles crown.

The results (finals):
Women: Sreeja Akula bt Sarah D. Nutte (Lux) 6-11, 12-10, 11-5 11-9;
doubles: Doo Hoi Kem & Zhu Chengzhu (HKG) bt Sreeja & Diya Chitale 4-11, 11-9, 11-7, 11-6.
Men's doubles: Manav Thakar & Manush Shah Mudit Dani & Akash Pal 11-7, 11-5, 9-11, 11-6.
Mixed doubles: Poymantee Baisya & Akash Pal bt G. Sathiyan & Manika Batra 11-9, 7-11, 11-9, 11-0.

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